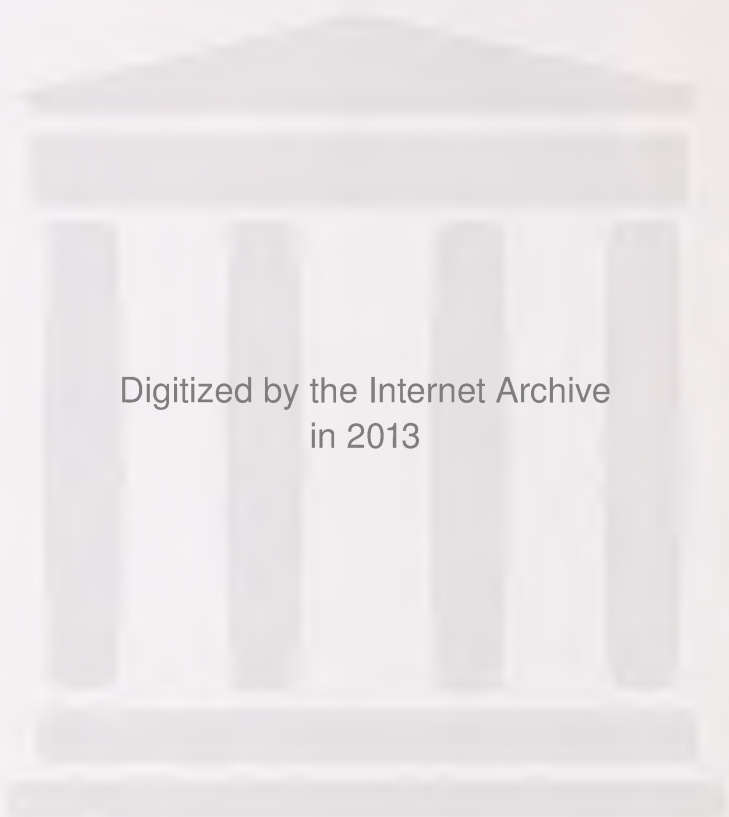


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CHRONICLE FALL 1997



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Reading you like the blind do Braille, I am.
Hiding behind the impish green light of the clock, two shadow
boxers piecing
together
what could be, should be, considered real, but
what isn't
because
we exist in the dark, spelunkers in a hidden cave,
away from people-laden days, where fumbling shadows that
mean literally
everything
to me
evaporate
as soon as the sun rises

living in those summer sundays
slow and languid
cool and collected
butterflies on fingertips
God is coming soon
in kaleidoscopes and kjetails
“I create life, I don’t destroy it”
All things are possible
with a little time and
the mind of a poet

Beyond all truth there is a shadow of a doubt
and behind every wall there is a face,
a beautiful, smiling face.

Walls are crashing down like
waves on the shores of Babylon
and the forces of nature in love
are a monumental thing.

Come on, I’ll show you the way.
Mother taught me how to fly.

Growing stars suck themselves
 to the ceiling. Under sheets
 heavy with summer,
 your turned hand curls
 around three fingers.
 Three fingers and I hear your pulse,
 as if you held
 my eardrums instead,
 naked and small in your palm,
 tingling to air
 in lines between skin.
 Though my neck stiffens, I move
 to catch a dark moan from your throat,
 a moan more sigh than moan,
 a sigh like cold hands
 when you've waited:
 you are asleep.

The shadows of your eyes
face the ceiling.
Do you dream of those stars,
or away, the west coast, or Norway,
arms of fjords reaching
into black sea, or farther:
stars outside in night?
My hand around yours now,
I still hear your pulse - you hold my eardrums:
small, naked.

a slow breeze of cologne
travels through the labyrinth
of cumbersome bystanders
to encounter her
standing in the corner,
sipping on a cola,
and stirring the ice in her glass
as if searching for answers
in tea leaves.
she wakes to the scent
and lifts her head
above the carpet of people
as if they were densely rolled out
to cover the room
and all its corners and doorways
with a curl gently set upon his forehead
all others are shyly tucked away
behind his ears.
they are the color of cocoa-cola
his eyes shimmer like aquamarine gems
recently discovered in a miner's pan,
once clouded by a lump of sand
her heart stops
for a second
as if it dove into cold deep waters.
her face invites the color
of pink bubblegum,
as a slow smile
makes its way from dimple to dimple
the icy soda loses interest
as she takes a chance
to move away from her corner
of the crowded room

Lady White, Lady Death

White
 A slender white
 She steals my breath.
 My temptress,
 my dangerous companion.
 I've felt her red cherry burn.

 I fear the child she wants me to have,
 the child her nature spawns from my body.
 I see her close to others and
 I need her.
 They grasp her 'round the waist,
 embracing her demoness womb.

 I struggle to resist her temptations,
 her comforts beckon my mind.
 I give in to my desire.

 I tear away her covering,
 maybe caress her with my lips.
 Ignite her flame.
 Her essence surrounds me,
 filling my body.
 I wore her down.
 I exhale

 Hours after my lust,
 I am reminded of my sinful acts by
 the anchor of her bold scent
 that stains my fingers and
 lips.

 I try to wash her from my hands,
 and though I regret my practices,
 I still long to embrace her
 again.

It works on your nerves like
Hot water on ice,
Cracking seams and spines down until
It breaks your face. In two.

Voices that whistle like winds
And shake the rusty, ancient swinggates of your mind
Whisper the crazier thoughts,
Encourage your behaviors.
One hour later you're swinging off poles
In the park, towel around your neck
For a cape.

I Am Superman,
The last son of Krypton.
Your yellow sun gives me the power
To save your world.
I can fly like my bones are hollow.
I am stronger than the biggest Rhinoceros and he ever seen.
I am serious shit.

Then, a moment of realization and
the voices run like cowards:
I catch a sight of myself in a car window,
a towel
around my neck.

There's no way I can save the world.
There's no way I can save the world.

Hell
in a handbasket.

Look.

I've got some money and I need
for you to take care of
a little business for me.

See.

There's someone I'm
trying to get rid of.

No, my trust was not betrayed.

No, none of my belongings have been stolen.

No, I'm not even being caused any bodily harm.

Actually, I've never even met the person-

For all I know, he could be a beautiful
young prince molded and shaped by
my hands to break the stereotypes bestowed upon him;
a man who will appreciate women
and love his children, fear God,
and wear an aura so proud
peacocks shrink in jealousy.

Or, she could even be my sweetness,
my lovely mocha Midas:
Doing all the things I wished, yet
Paving her won roads,
My pride and joy, my best friend,
Stronger than gravity with a mind
more brilliant than arrows of
sunlight shot past tree limbs at
Daybreak.

But to tell the truth,
None of that matters right now.
I am what matters.

Just make it painless...

And from her shyness: subtle power.
Even her shyness is quiet.
And then her patient speaks.
I'll learn to be quiet so that I can hear too.

And from her shyness: subtle power.

Surprisingly, shyness is a power: a strength that we do not understand. It is not something that should be fixed. Sometimes it is the first thing that we embrace in a stranger. Sometimes it brings comfort.

Now I understand what I had reacted to. What the patients had reacted to. Even what she had reacted to in me. I see where comfort comes from. Instilling comfort is her power. Shyness is her device.

So, I've decided to learn. I've decided to follow. I've decided to study the power that I see in her. I've decided to use the power she sees in me and not to vanquish it. I promise to keep it for my patients.

Even her shyness is quiet.

It is not louder than her confidence. It doesn't shout over her strength. It is quiet. So quiet, in fact, that you barely hear it whispering to you. You can feel it though. She is quiet. But everyone stops to listen. And when she is done, she stops to listen, too.

And then her patient speaks.

The patient speaks quietly but she hears loudly. I barely hear but I'll learn. And I think she knows it because when I'm quiet, I think I can hear her say it.

I'll learn to be quiet so that I can hear too.

A seventeen year old boy walks past,
hand-linked
with a forty year old woman.
She plants one on him,
as they stop at the meat counter.
My boyfriend giggles,
my stomach rumbles.
The stock boys look on in lust.
They are blinded.
The check out girl looks on in disgust.
She's reminded.
"The world is a very different place,"
the seventy year old bag boy says.
The woman bows up
and says "Thank you," to the clerk.
She picks up her tenderloin,
holding it like a scepter.
The boy turns to give us an
'eat shit' look.
Everyone watches them leave.
My boyfriend picks up our groceries
and walks ahead of me to the car.
I am in love with his nineteen year old butt.

The weekly pile of clothes doth grow
To the laundry I must go
With suds in hand and clothes in tow
For clean clothes I have no mo'

What, perchance, soils thy lapel?
Didst it stain whenst I fell?
T'was too many beers I canst tell
For today, do I feel like hell

O, soiled linens, why must thou cost so?
Pray tell, if not washed who wouldst know?
T'would please me more to happy hour go
For there, wild seeds must I sow

O dirt! Berate my filthy linen
I must be clean when I'm a-singin'
Thinkest I shall begin again
Soil-free shall be the togs I'm seen in

O Cheer and Gain and Bold and Shout
Many a stain I must work out
Mustard seed and sauerkraut
"Out damn spot"—OUT!

So I sit here on the bathroom floor. My fingernails mustard yellow on the tips from that smoking habit I've got to kick again. I just felt like writing a little. Contemplating life. You know life is as short as the time it takes a blood drop to hit the floor from the wrist of the local nobody. Everybody knew him. "Oh yeah, he was a cool guy," or remember etc. was how they recollected him. He honestly wasn't depressed, or psychotic, or freaking out on drugs. He was just . . . lost. He didn't know where he was going. Couldn't decide on his future. "I don't know" became his motto. He just could not find his purpose. He just finds himself sitting on a sheet of little white square tiles in the bathroom staring at the rusted sink bottoms. No one cares how they function underneath. All the sludge and grime doesn't matter. Just as long as the tops are porcelain white and serve their purpose. A drop of blood splatches on the sinktop causing it to be ripped of its beauty. No one hears it smash into the silent hill of white. Who does the person that everybody talks about turn to when he needs help? Somewhere, that bit of information he is searching for is hidden away deep behind the cornea of some unknowing bastard. There it is, his secret power; the fuel to keep him going. Two more drops spread red over the smoky grey counter. Where was that knowledge? He lost it in his games of fucked up music, bong hits, and bullshit classes that mean nothing to a person like him. Wait, he found it! As he looked at himself ten times over. Looking past the unstyled hair and the average face behind it. Blotchy skin, clogged pores, and dark bags melt into a sea of lime green flowing blue and red. Fading into the black pits of darkness. Total Darkness. Unable to see anything. Unable to grasp anything. Unable to feel . . . anything. There lies that glimpse of something to be. A blink throws chaos into full streams of red flashing lights and people dressed in full outfits of blue, green, and white. But the white is never clear. It must always be blurry. Blurry and foggy as the nighttime on that day after the rain stopped. The last raindrop fell from the half-shingled roof to the cold, dirty beige concrete and flowed away into the stormdrain forever. Into the cold, wet, darkness. So he sits in his chamber and catches the blood drops on the end of his tongue and mixes them with his tears, causing the warmth in his brain to signal the grey neon sign of awareness. It shines bright through the thick mass of polyester, but it can't beat the cotton. Never. You can't top cotton. And don't even think of trying. It spends its life in and out, constantly being drowned in sorrows and then burned from the heat of the sun's corona. Just to be that one favorite shirt. The shirt that everyone knows is you and only you. The shirt with that spot from that one time you clumsily fell into that puddle of tie-dye. When you forgot who you were or pretended you were something else when you knew there was no way you could be. But, I sit here. Yes, I sit here, and will pretend to be that person while desperately fighting sleep. I

watch the blood flow from the countertop and slide the white floor as it slithers down the drain. Rain. Water. . . washes the blood from the porcelain sink, from the counter, from the nice white floor. Even the drain is scrubbed clean so the aged copper seems to give somewhat of a dim glow. No traces are left. Mustn't leave a spot. I watch as the mangled fool is carried away in his black bag. His last piece of luggage. "Travel lightly," mom always said. So it's just me in this empty cage of shapes. He has left no mark on this world. No traces must be left. I watched a few years ago as his glimpse fell to the floor and rolled to me. I absorbed it and all of its bite and confusion. Now, it is hidden away deep within my realm. So I look at myself through and through into the damp grey haze of wonder.

Jazz howled hard and vicious in the distance
 as the cool sun dipped below the hot sweaty trees
 a bayou breeze swept away the musty stagnation
 with the refreshing stank of the sweet swamp
 swirling and circling in the bottom of my drink
 world glazes over as brown eyes come to the clarity
 of God
 languid bodies ping-pong
 sinning like breathing
 ice in my drink
 masks, breasts, beads, liquor
 dark night of the soul
 Sex, swine, sin, fall from grace
 night wrestles the moon from the sun still the Jazz howls
 a carnal forebearer
 predator in the night
 priests sell penny beers next to satan taking souls for that cost
 creole debauchery of the highest order
 so eager to die the throngs of jesters dance for the king
 the kaiser sits on Endymion's throne the Jazz blows its
 knowledge

howling

I am a child of words,
nursed on literature,
weaned off of windswept prairies
and Canada's Victorian isles,
taught to cut my teeth
on structuralism and new criticism.
The taste fills my senses,
I roll the texture on my tongue.
Alliteration, allusion, all done
time for seconds.
Heap my plate high,
serve me Norton Anthologies
on a silver platter.
The poetic appetizer whets my desire,
I tear into the main course meat of theory,
finish the feast with a short-shirty sundae.
Words, words everywhere
and gallons more to drink.
I am drunk off the sounds,
turned on by the suggestions.
This hunger gets me high.

List of characters: Patrick, Alley, Michelle, Chris, Maya

Lunch Time

Patrick and Alley are seated at a table. Michelle is sitting across from them, but neither notice her.

Alley: What's new with you today?

Patrick: I don't want to go. The sky is falling. (He stares into the sky above). Have you ever noticed that the sky appears bluer every other day, or is it lighter or maybe heavier on certain days than others? Maybe that's why the sky is falling - because it's too heavy today. What do you think?

Alley: I have noticed that the sky looks blank, as blank as every other day. But maybe it is too heavy. Besides, it contains all the heavens - it must be extremely heavy. But today it is as blank as it was yesterday and the day before that. But I'm not one to judge the appearance of the sky. Don't trust me, I can't tell a handsaw from a hawk or a hawk from an angel.

Patrick: Ah! That was remarkable. Maybe the sky isn't falling but receding. Then maybe we are just floating, but falling, crashing down - no water for us to land in.

Both Alley and Patrick look down at the ground beneath them.

Alley: I do say, without water one will surely die. They must have water where we're going?

Patrick: That's nonsense. Only the sky has water and if it is falling it would all evaporate before it reached us.

Alley: So it is falling because if it wasn't then it would become over saturated and rain. Then there would be water.

Patrick: But wouldn't it still evaporate?

Alley: Maybe. Only if it wanted to.

Patrick: True, very true.

Michelle, who was engaged in an out of body experience, returned to earth and glanced up from the book in which she was reading.

Michelle: What are you two babbling on about?

Patrick: Ah! h! It hath appeared from the depths of the earth.

Alley: Are you a witch or a follower of Hecate?

Michelle: No, I just appear as if by magic. Didn't you notice me here all the while?

Patrick: No, you are just a figment of my imagination and since it doesn't work, you don't exist.

Alley: But then aren't we all figments of our own imagination?

Patrick: Yes, yes that sounds about right. But just remember Michelle doesn't exist in our world.

Michelle: That's right Patrick. I'm just a bubble floating in emptiness.

Michelle picks up her book while Alley and Patrick look blankly at each other.

Patrick: Fine just go into your own secluded little room, your own world.

Alley: That's all one ever does. Should we play with her now?

Patrick: We already did that. Let's think of something else to do.

Silence.

Alley and Patrick are staring into the distance while Maya comes in carrying a bag of peanut M&M's.

Maya: Hello Michelle Lee. Hello Al-ley. (Pause) Oh, hello Patrick.

Michelle: Michelle glances up from her book. Hello Maya. (After saying hello she looks around her, sees Alley and Patrick staring off into the sky again, and then returns back to her book).

Maya: (to Alley and Patrick) What ya' two looking at?

Alley and Patrick: The sky.

Maya: Alley, do you want any M&M's?

Alley: No that's OK.

Maya: Patrick?

Patrick: Sure.

Alley: Hey, I thought you didn't like peanuts?

Patrick: I don't.

Patrick looks at the M&M and then takes the chocolate shell off the peanut and eats it. He then stares at the peanut. After carefully examining it he gives it to Alley who does the same thing. Seeing nothing, Alley gives the peanut back to Patrick who examines it one more time and then, after seeing nothing again throws it back at Maya.

Maya: Hey! What was that for?

Patrick: I didn't do anything, don't blame me.

Maya: Well then who threw it at me?

Patrick: Nobody. It fell from the heavens. The sky is falling and every-

thing that is too heavy is falling.

Maya: This peanut is not heavy at all.

Alley: Everything that has no purpose in life is also falling. We're all falling to our destiny, away from the sky. If we only had time to plan our escape.

Maya, feeling that the conversation that has developed is becoming too weird for her returns to eating her M&M's.

Patrick: Too bad we don't have wings, then we could fly away from it all and forever soar in the heavens in happiness.

Alley: If only we had time.

Alley and Patrick fix their eyes at the huge clock looming in the distance.

Alley: It's too much. I can't take this anymore! Why can't we just stop time?

Patrick: It's hopeless, why does it have to be this way? Why must we all go?

Alley: Maybe it's our destiny since the day we were born. Nobody has control over fate.

Patrick: I do and I'm not going to go. I'll figure some way out of this.

(Silence) I know, I'll stop time.

Alley: How do you expect to achieve that remarkable feat?

Patrick: Well. (He thinks.) Why don't we just stop the clock?

Alley: That's ridiculous, no one can stop the great clock. Besides even if we did, we like everything else would just become frozen in time.

Patrick: At least then we won't have to go.

Alley: But if time ever resumed we'd be right back where we started from.

Patrick: Why don't you ever let me have a moment of comfort. Why must you always remind me of the inevitable? Every time I try to forget about that awful place we're destined for, you have to hit me square in the face with reality. Don't you have any compassion?

Alley: I was just trying to be logical.

Patrick: From now on why don't you just let me have my own thoughts and let me glory in them?

Alley: What does it matter for? You'd just reach the same conclusion that I always reach some time or another. So why wait?

Patrick: There you go again. I never want to speak to you again.

Alley: I heard that one before.

Patrick turns away from Alley and stares off into the distance. Alley is staring at the clock. In the foreground Chris, with a face still all food, comes towards Alley. He comes and sets his food beside Alley and clears his throat. In the meantime, Maya moves over and sits directly in front of Chris's food and steals his cinnamon roll. Chris clears his mind once more, but still Alley pays him no attention so he starts to sing.

Chris: Cousin, Cousin, I certainly do see.

Cousin, Cousin, won't you let me be?

I traveled far and wide -

Wanting you here by my side.

Cousin, Cousin, please come home with me.

Alley tries not to pay Chris any attention, but Chris goes on anyway. He steps behind her and shakes her back and forth. Then he gives her a big hug. Patrick sits there and has a gigantic smirk on his face.

Alley: Why must you do this to me every single day?

Chris: Because you're my cousin, Cousin Jockan.

Alley: I am not your cousin and I never will be. We were never ever related to each other in any way, shape, or form.

Chris: Yes you are my cousin and I love you.

Chris gives Alley another hug and Patrick starts laughing hysterically.

Alley: What are you laughing at? I thought you were just going to speak to me again?

Patrick: I'm not, I'm enjoying my moment of complete happiness in my revenge.

Alley: Then if you're not talking to me now, who are you talking to?

Patrick: A figment of my imagination.

Alley: You just can't stand being wrong, that's all.

Patrick: I'm never wrong.

Alley: Then how do you know where we're going and why are you so afraid of it if we've never even been there? What did you all find bad?

Patrick: I've heard terrible tales about that place. One day I think his name was Lazarus, thought it was so bad that he never wanted to go back again.

Alley: Well if he was able to come back, then what are we worrying about? If we don't like it we can just leave.

Patrick: It doesn't work that way.

Alley: Why not?

Patrick: Because he was chosen. He was special. A man named God saved him.

Alley: Then why won't God save us as well?

Patrick: Because we don't know him and Lazarus did, that's why.

Alley: Well then we should seek out God before it's too late.

Patrick: What good will it do now? By the time we did find him, it will already be too late. Besides, I heard that he lives far away from this place. He lives in some huge white palace up in the heavens somewhere. Somewhere far away from all mortal beings.

Alley: Then how did Lazarus come to know him?

Patrick: Didn't you learn anything while you were young? God sent down his son Jesus to save us from our sins as long as you believed in him. And Lazarus was saved from the grips of death to show to all that Jesus was truly the son of God.

Alley: Well then we should seek out Jesus.

Patrick: Haven't you learned anything? Jesus was crucified on the cross and died.

Alley: Oh. But wasn't he resurrected from the dead?

Patrick: So now you remember? Of course he was, but now he's with God up in the heavens.

Alley: But wasn't he crucified to save us?

Patrick: Only those who believe.

Alley: Then why don't we just believe?

Patrick: Who says we don't?

Alley: Then if we believe we should be saved.

Patrick: Only if we're chosen, I guess?

Alley: If only we knew

Patrick and Alley are silent once more and seem lost in a trance until the resounding voice of Chris stimulates their minds.

Chris: I've given up meat for good. It's not at all beneficial to the health of one's body. In fact it is actually harmful. There's just one thing I don't understand. Why do they call fish Seafood and chicken products Poultry when it's all meat? Why don't they just call it all meat?

Patrick, seeing his opportunity to end the monotony of his current situation, jumps into the conversation with his own smart remarks.

Patrick: They can't call it all meat because not just meat products can be referred to as meat. For example, the inside of a piece of fruit is called the meat of the fruit. It is the same with lots of other foods. Hell, you might

as well stop eating. If you can't eat meat what can you eat?

Chris, totally humiliated by Patrick, quickly changes the subject so that he can gain the attention of everyone else around him.

Chris: Does anyone believe in predestination? I don't. I believe that everyone has their own decisions to make and not some external force above. If we were predestined we would have no free will, make anything that we desired.

Maya: (licking the cinnamon from off her fingers) I don't believe in it either.

Chris: What do you think Cousin Jockamo?

Alley: I don't care, and will you please stop calling me Cousin?

Chris: But you're my cousin and I love you.

Patrick starts to laugh again but before he becomes too immersed in the art of laughter Alley stares at him with a childlike seriousness on her face. Patrick sees the seriousness in her eyes and stops laughing. He can see that she is disturbed by the diminishing time. He too knows that the end was approaching faster than ever.

Alley: Patrick, do you believe in predestination?

Patrick: Of course. All the world's a stage and I'm the director. When I die the world ceases to exist.

Michelle, hearing this statement, jumps into the conversation immediately, refusing to let Patrick see things differently from the way she views things.

Michelle: That's not true at all. When you die the world will just continue onward. It doesn't care whether you're dead or alive. It functions on its own and it won't cease to exist just because one person dies.

Patrick: I'm not just one person, I am the director and when I die the play ends and thus the world ends.

Michelle: No Patrick, the world will still exist. You might think it doesn't but it does. Besides what difference will it make, you'll be dead anyway. And if you're dead how would you know if the world came coming?

Patrick: That's easy enough. I'm immortal and will survive my own death. That way I'll prove that the world can't exist after I'm dead. So there.

Michelle: No one's immortal, surely not you. Just face it, you aren't sure yourself if the world will exist or not after you're dead.

Patrick: Well I know that it won't exist because I'm really the director of

this world and when I die everything else will die, including you.

Michelle: No, the laws of Physics don't apply to me.

Patrick: Oh shut up. Why don't you just crawl back into your bubble before I choose to pop it?

Michelle, thinking she has beaten Patrick at his own game, gladly returns to her book. She has a gigantic smile on her face and appears to be at ease.

Patrick: One day she'll see that the laws of Physics apply to everyone, including her.

Patrick is distraught by the idea that the laws of Physics do indeed apply to him. He sits silently with a blank expression on his face while Alley watches him attentively. Then, as if in a single instance, Patrick's eyes light up.

Alley: (noticing the sense of hope in Patrick's eyes) What? Why are you so happy all of a sudden? Did you discover how to stop time, or how to reach God or maybe Jesus? (Patrick doesn't say a word). Well, what is it?

Patrick: I've got it! If I die the play will end and we won't have to go.

Alley: That's right. All we have to do is to die first. I just have one question.

Patrick: Not this again. But go on ahead if you feel you must continue.

Alley: Well, how is it that we are suppose to die?

Patrick: Well I'm not sure exactly. But since time is coming to an end it shouldn't be that hard to think of a way. Practically any way will do so long as we don't have to go.

Alley lets out a long terrifying cry that startles Patrick.

Patrick: What was that for? Are you OK?

Alley: I was just thinking of what it must be like to die. It's scary. There's a dark void that surrounds my mind and my heart every time I think of it. What will become of us?

Patrick: I haven't thought of that, and now that you mention it I see your point. I've changed my mind. I don't want to die.

Alley: Well if we don't want to die, then what are we going to do now?

Patrick: I know. All we have to do is to kill something and then revive it and then we'll know what it's like to die. (Pause. Patrick sees a biscuit within arms reach and picks it up. He looks carefully at it and sets it down on the table in front of him.) This will make an excellent specimen. Your

pencil, if you please. (Alley hands him the pencil).

Alley: What do you need my pencil for? (Patrick doesn't say a word and begins to stab the piece of bread over and over again). Are you crazy? The bread isn't alive and it can't be killed. (Patrick continues stabbing the bread). Are you deaf? You can't kill that. It's useless. Besides even if you could kill something how would you revive it? It's not our fate to know what it's like to die. It's nobody's right to know.

With these words Patrick throws down the pencil and shoves the biscuit aside. Alley picks up the holy biscuit and tears it apart. She examines both pieces and then sets it down. She looks at Patrick's face and sees that he is frustrated, so she picks up both halves of the biscuit and tries to give life to it by pretending that it can talk.

Alley: (to the biscuit) How are you feeling today? Fine I suppose. I just feel a little holy today. You don't say? In fact, I think I feel a little faint. Is your head like a bobbing cork in the ocean? Yes, I feel like the water is consuming me. I feel like I'm drowning. Help me I don't know how to swim. Don't die, oh please don't die. (Alley turns to Patrick). Patrick he's dying, can't you help him?

Patrick: Oh I'll help him all right. (He picks up the pencil and raises it above his head).

Alley: Noooo. (The pencil goes straight through the heart of the biscuit and remains stuck there. Alley sees that the end has arrived). I'm dying - I, I can't see anymore. (Alley looks at Patrick and says "Et tu Brice.") Alley falls out of her chair and remains still on the floor.

Patrick: Arise I command thee. Arise. Arise from the grip of death.

After the chanting of these words Alley slowly begins to open her eyes.

Patrick: So what was it like to die? Is it a satisfactory end to it all?

Alley: It was horrible. All dark and cold. It was like I was in a wooden coffin with no room for me to even breathe. It was worse than Hell.

Patrick: How would you know? You haven't even been to Hell.

Alley: Just believe me, it wasn't pleasant.

A bell rings and everyone gets up and leaves the table. Alley and Patrick remain where they are and stare up at the clock.

Patrick: I guess the time has finally arrived.

Alley: No! It's too soon, it can't be the end already? I'm not ready to go.

Patrick: Nobody's ever ready, no matter what one does to prepare.

Alley: Can't we just not go? Why can't we just stay here? Why must we go now?

Patrick: The bells have summoned us and we must obey their callings.

Alley: You can't just give up now? I thought you didn't want to go either?

Patrick: I don't, but it's too late. We've done everything in our power to prevent our fate, but it's useless.

Alley: But you're the director - can't you just change the script?

Patrick: Perhaps tomorrow.

Alley: Well why not now? Why not today?

Patrick: This play is finished, but tomorrow's a whole new script with new characters and new beginnings.

Alley: But why must you end this play like this? After all that hard work to change our destiny. Can't you see that I don't want to go to Physics?

The curtain begins to close and Patrick and Alley are lead off the stage by two mysterious figures dressed in black.

The End.

A coffee shop at the
top
of the stairs,
the coffee drinkers
unaware
of her
purple and blue and black dyed hair
she just stares
over her steaming cup,
and through the mist
I blow her a kiss that she
misses by two-fourths of an inch

Oh, what a night,
two clowns in shirts striped black and
gold
straddle the chairs of their little round
table,
sitting like dogs ready to pounce
missing the music by half an octave
of integrity

and I eavesdrop on a conversation
about love and masturbation,
how could I help but overhear,
she was practically screaming into my ear

"How can he say something like that
to you"
"Oh, I don't know,
but maybe it's all true"

and that's how my peace passed over
tonight,
in a purple room
under a dim lamplight
while the fat girl in the corner
makes eyes at me,
I'll leave sometime soon,
but first,
tell me of Oz and the Dark Side
of the Moon

I tirelessly trudge
 through plots of abandoned poems
 pursuing all those
 to which I can relate, revive
 and replace the "I"'s
 with my mercies
 my memories
 my mouth.
 I become one of them
 and share her obsessions.
 Together we conquer battles,
 but I let her fight,
 while I timidly watch and admire
 over her black-and-white print shoulder.
 She must know I stand behind her
 like a memorial statue,
 a commemorative figure of her previous victories.
 She becomes my outlet of escape
 from this disillusioned world
 so I may march into her bold-faced reality.
 Perusing her battle plan,
 I see her aspirations
 and agree to accept the challenge, the task
 of becoming a small voice
 in an intense crowd of rioting critics.
 A whisper from me among the trenches,
 nestled in the mud and darkness,
 a cry of anguish from her within the lines,
 together we plea for appreciation.
 For all those who know the words,
 this is our battlecry.

I stomped into the kitchen hissing and spouting
And slammed my books into the dying table
And watched the wood leaves shiver in fear of collapse
And I hopped around on the warpath
Spitting foul names and even worse curses
Because she said I lied to her
And you and I both know I never lied to her
And she said I didn't love her anymore
And I was a grain of sand in the Sahara of boys
And I told her I'd die for her
And she told me to die
And I hit you
And some of your heavier magnets fell to the linoleum
And I'm sorry.

Back then I was walking across the one and only place that brought me closer to anything, even if it was only the cold sun and the facade of a huge library brightened only by the fact that it had a huge mural on it that was tastefully done. Unimportant. But this cardinal was following me wherever I was wondering, even when I didn't know where that was. Every time I took the time to look up it was there, in some tree branch looking down, down at me. I was reminded. Unimportant. I tried my best to follow, because it was everything to me, it was life and escape and company and sanity. Unimportant. Because now I'm seeing black cats all over campus, and the last time they came around to watch over me it was when I was getting over the last one and now they're back to see the sequel, like cult fans of a failing star come to see a disappointing second release for the hundredth time. Unimportant. Because it's not going to be quick enough, and it's not going to be painless enough, because I've got all the pain you could store and more. Unimportant. Somehow you'll find more of me to hand over and it still won't be enough. Why if it was your mistake to treat me this way can it not be my mistake to have met you in the first place?

"There's something growing inside me I must stifle an absent pain something purple and glowing I find myself wearing a hard core battle fatigue daily waiting for another attack of force another instance simply more painful words I don't understand but I'm grabbing at the chance that its self-defense that all you're doing is curling into a corn of flinging painful words to build a couple bricks In this half-moon we are only 1/4 of one another not quite 1/2 to 1/2 something like puzzle pieces that don't quite fit but we know they should so we try forcing it I'm lucking almost by chance that we should wait for the summer and go for another full moon drive wait until its just right again wait until its late night and the wind buries us in each other maybe that's the only thing to heal us"

"There is no good reason to find yourself in an ocean of me an ocean made of soft salty tears that taste like the lover of sand and you imagine yourself with an intimate emotion on your tongue thinking 'why isn't my love this poignant' and realizing it is; its just more of a strawberries and cream where everything is compromise. If I crumpled up my favorite constellation into a round paper ball and let it fall — if I strengthened it out it wouldn't be the same constellation. Try explaining all that to a Saturday when your mind should be sleeping and your life should consist of shadows and sun streams through the leaves of a tree and all the only marching past you and you think, in your infinite wisdom, that we are all that organized even in this relaxation of purposes. This is a time that makes me crave for you to live twice and through a vessel of me — like I can crave fudge ripple ice cream when the sun is so hot I imagine being in my best Sunday clothes in Hell — but more of an intangible craving like when the sun explodes into a sunset and I want to be that vibrantly beautiful. Carefully touch me because I might break. Cradle me gently in this ecstasy of youth Help me explode vibrantly onto this canvas of sky and I will call you the light-maker heart-breaker son of the Sun lover of mine."

you asked me to send you something from my trip
so i mailed you a postcard
(full of smiles and bravado and not missing you at all)
and now i feel bereft
empty of you
and that small precious responsibility—
it's in your hands now

so i look out the window
onto the dark side of the world
and i scratch words onto paper
distracted by the stars
(so bright from this height)
who whisper to me in cold voices:
"you will never see him again"

and suspended in the void between belief and regret
i think of you
and time and space
the distance between people
and how it shrinks in the dark
how i can suddenly remember the taste of your mouth
the exact color of your eyes
the transient perfection of us

in your arms i came of age
my eyes all scars and winter now
i am hard and cold and blind with hope
struck with inconsistencies:
my rage at love and lust and you
the great benefits of irresponsibility
the strength to be wrought from loneliness
as God's children cry themselves to sleep for what He almost gave them

so i fly away from you
and my soul stretches thin
and i lean my forehead on the window
drifting out
out
into the darkness
falling
into memory
into futility
and love

Stuck.

In a moment.

All the money in the world couldn't.

Bye, You.

Just left. Me.

Here in the moment. Away to a
Liberation. Movement away from you. To me
and on. To the next person. Who could be Abel
to unstick me. From you.

I wake up with my back against the cabinets
underneath the kitchen sink.
My shirt is wet.
It's when I feel the cool lick of the tiles
through my pants
that I try to stand and notice my collarbone's broken.
Two yards away lies the fireplace poker, bent and bleeding.
You are at my feet, sobbing.
I must have been cut
because you kneel over me, moisten your finger
with your tongue
and wipe the blood from my forehead;
from you, the closest thing to a kiss I'm ever gonna get.

you tell me I am beautiful
 as though you can see me:

my beauty is deeper than your perception will allow
 it is the trenchant roar of a thousand
 bodies secretly ripening
 swell of breast, curve of hip
 a softness about the eyes that whispers
 maternity

can you hear the collective cry?
 it begins—
 and oh how they despise themselves for it
 and they rape themselves daily
 with ridicule and self-loathing
 hardening themselves
 almost unconsciously
 in expectation of man

man—
 don't we always desire
 that which can destroy us?
 and who is the destroyer here?
 not I—
 it was woman,
 given the supreme Gift of creation,
 who gave you life...
 and you, pathetic and fumbling
 in your power struggles and politics,
 who hurt and break and waste
 what God has given you:
 and she loves you still
 and it is I who have the power
 locked in this weak and humble body
 ebbing and flowing in tears
 and blood

and you may look from a distance
at my courage and strength
the velvet honeyed heaviness of my ~~woman's~~ body
my amused patience with you —
and you may call me beautiful if you like
i will thank you on the behalf of
womanhood.

"I used to run and jump and climb and hide and
play games and roughhouse and laugh and cry."

Henry Trufan

"But I exist within the phases
of the moon"

Anonymous

"and the bowl of sky
reddens a cotton rim at dusk"

Joseph Bates

"Set oven to 98.6 degrees farenheit and bake for eighty years."
Minna Chow

"The tide pulls and twists at the roots of my life."

Joe Woodman

"Me?
I'm just an umbrella
fella,
but there's no rain out
here"

John Joyner

"I never gave up,
It's his fault you died"

Theresa Nassrah

“... he singed and licked my fingertips
to the point of excitement.”

Trend C. Truesdale

“Where i come from the only thing sacred is sleep”

Christopher W Norfolk

“ashes are ashes...lust is lust
and Winter froze the both of us.”

Phillip A. White

“some greenest days set my soul to flight”

soulpoet

“Gather what you can through experience
and the rest will come to you in dreams.”

Thomas Totman

“The world was a multispeckled wonder of colorful adventure”

Jason Wallace

AS I STEP FROM THE FIRES OF MY HELL
 GOLDEN SPARKS HURL DOWN UPON ME
 THEIR SHARP EDGES CUTTING LINES IN MY FLESH
 THEY TRACE HOT PATHS DOWN MY VEINS
 WHICH STAND OUT AS I CLENCH MY FIST
 I STAND

CRUCIFIED

AND THROW BACK MY HEAD IN AN OUTRAGED DEFEAT
 AND RELEASE A SILENT SCREAM
 MY MENTAL CHALLENGE TO THE WORLD

across the street
 i step from angelic mansions
 delighting in the brief shower
 the soothing rain splatters on the ground
 rhythmic
 cool droplets play along my skin
 racing each other to the earth
 to nourish life
 i stand

exalted
 my head thrown back in joyous laughter

AND WE PASS

in the rain

WE NOTICE

but ignore

WE GO WITH OUR PAINFUL

Blissful lives

NOT KNOWING OF THE LOVE

pain waiting inside

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“Performance”

Camouflage is not a disguise; it is a costume to
perform in.

I am English and have pretended to be so since.
I am a painter because it is still the hierarchy.
I am arrogant by design.

I understand to be a painter is temporary; it is
simply another constructed identity of ego and
eccentricity. Being a “Brit” is temporary too;
When *you* believe your romanticized cliché’s about
“Tea Time” and “The Beatles” *you* become my
audience and believe in my props.

But by revealing my disguise I convert fantasy into
reality.

Northern Ireland....

I know the history, studied the facts, I tried to walk
the fence until I was pushed.

I am British.
I am prejudiced.
I have an identity.

Chronicle



Front Cover:

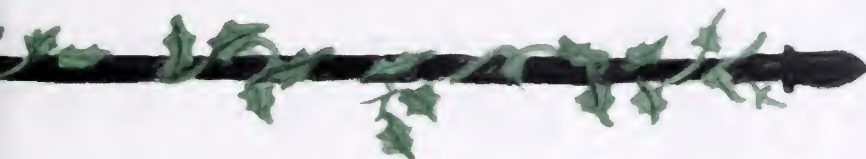
Reader
water color

Cecile L. K. Martin
15" x 20"

Back Cover:

Untitled
ceramics

Denise Woodward-Detrich



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There is a constellation in my imagination,
let me tell you about it,
if you happen to find any fascination in such things
I'm sure you'll be interested

it rises from the west in the cold
winter sky above the South Pole,
and some cosmic eskimos think it resembles
a woman,
but actually
it is the shape of a street light,
one that arcs over the rues in Paris,
a Parisian street light,
that's right

a row of five stars compose the
symphonic ionian pole,
and they are, in order,
Deep Thought, the blue giant,
Stella, my only love,
Carrsus, the white dwarf,
Lion, my furry friend,
and Dulcinea, my only other love,
they are magnificent stars,
you should look for the code
in their twinkle

then the red fluctuating giant
turns the corner,
his name is not that important
but I should tell you that he will
explode in 2 days time,
a supernova without rhyme,
and the world will see him spread out
purple in the sky and say
"Oh, how magnificent"



But what
is more magnificent?
I'll tell you,
look 2 arc seconds
southeast from Carrus
and you will see a galaxy
never seen by human eyes,
you will see a galaxy
colored blue and white,
this is the shining that
makes up the light,
it is a spiral galaxy
with a few main sequence
girls and boys,
it is a place where
comets and clouds are
Christmas toys,
look for ellipses
and rocket ships,
hits and misses,
planets shaped
like Hershey's Kisses,
why, this galaxy
is governed by a hyperintelligent shade of
the color blue

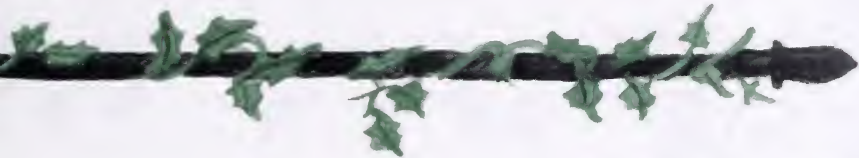
and this entire constellation is in love with you

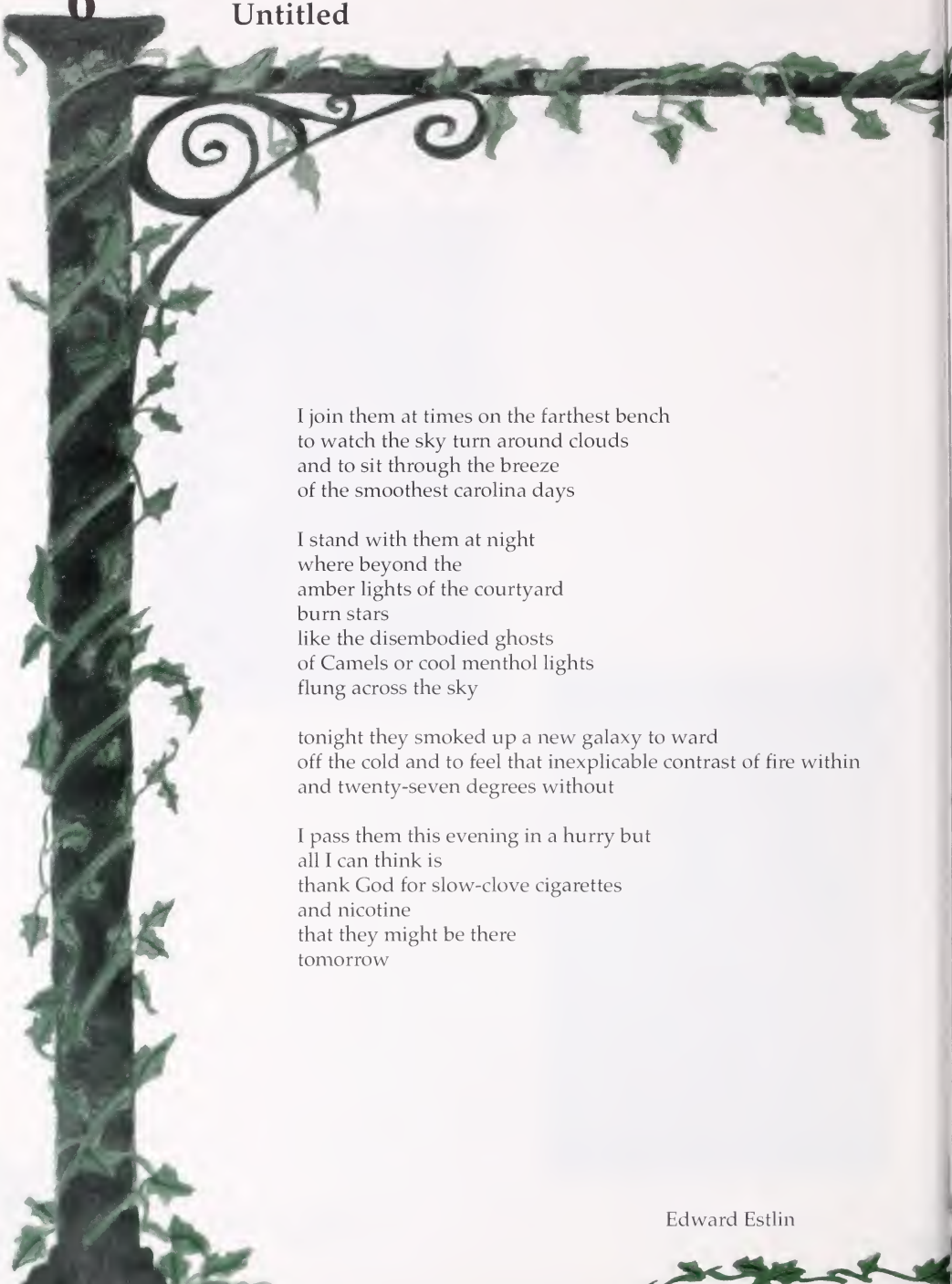
Memories

See a rotting branch,
Reaching for your red chainsaw.
I'll miss my tree swing.

Grits

When I eat grits
I feel like I'm a child
Eating papier mache.





I join them at times on the farthest bench
to watch the sky turn around clouds
and to sit through the breeze
of the smoothest carolina days

I stand with them at night
where beyond the
amber lights of the courtyard
burn stars
like the disembodied ghosts
of Camels or cool menthol lights
flung across the sky

tonight they smoked up a new galaxy to ward
off the cold and to feel that inexplicable contrast of fire within
and twenty-seven degrees without

I pass them this evening in a hurry but
all I can think is
thank God for slow-clove cigarettes
and nicotine
that they might be there
tomorrow



They were counting down her last hours, recounting the reasons why... and I was driving through the wind and rain and cold to get somewhere warm and she only had two hours left... on the way home she was gone. No more countdowns to drive me back through the rain and the cold.

Earlier that day I had, for no reason, boiled and consumed six eggs. Slowly, methodically, I wasn't hungry, but I tapped each one carefully on the counter, peeled off the shell in one spiral motion, sprinkled salt and pepper and bit into the small side first... always the "far end" of the egg, working my way to the dry yolk, sucking my fingers afterward like I wasn't quite done. All six the same way. I didn't know about her then, but now I wonder, was she there, in her cell in Texas, hands clasped to keep from flying with last hopes, knowing I was having this last meal just for her?

Tonight there is no mention on the radio about her death. No descriptions of her last moments, strapped to a table, maybe still hoping, or maybe she was lost in those dilated moments between the prick of the needle and the last pulse through her veins through her heart through her brain. I cooked one egg tonight. Over easy. The yolk bursting as I tried to flip everything over. Yellow, spreading over the pan like inevitability.

As I watched the elephant cross the straw that connected the two parallel words where my small South American dog wanders, I thought back to a time—a time before my father was sent away for carrying those things.

I would not go as far as to say he was crazy...it was just the voice of that woman. "Would you like fries with that?" Over and over, she would never shut up.

I think in the end, it was the sight of McDonalds bags that made my father carry mineral water and small snakes.

Saul's Story

You think he would tell her the reason he did not come home until 3 am
For most people the thought would cross their mind

For Saul...a story was needed. Do you have a lie?

Looking from the back 40 of the field, it seemed that if I made it to the top I would just fall off the world, but that's been done before.

Burrito

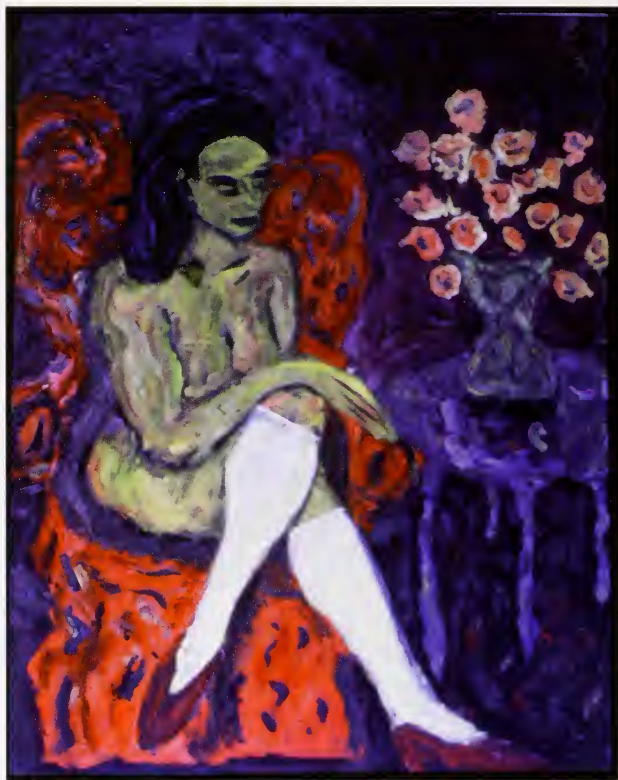
Why do they call it Taco Bell? Well they do serve tacos and some of those old stuck o buildings in Mexico had bells in them, a long time ago, before they sold them for Tequila.....Go figure!

Say you have a dollar and you cut it into 80 pieces, not only do you break the law, you've completed the first step in becoming homeless.

Later in the night, she rolled over and asked him where he had been. I guess a lie is a lie, but to say "I almost ran over an old man carrying mineral water and small snakes, so I took a quick exit to dodge him. Then I was somehow in Mexico with no money so I stole a bell for one of those, ah ah, one of those stuck o things and sold it for money so a drunk could drink. Then I would that the money had been torn into 80 pieces and I could not use it. So I went to the local pub and there I found a watch, it didn't keep time...Damn it! I missed Scooby-Doo!" With all the dreams she had, he might as well have been gone.



Jeff Edwards
mixed media





Robin Childers
detail



Faraway eyes look past red lights. Keith Summons hits the side street alleyways looking for fixed fortune. Powder on his nose. Grey veins. Burns yellow to clear. No resolution--no sympathy. He senses escape. But he knows he can't be free. Hard to keep clean. Live in cramped cold city streets with windows like jigsaw puzzles. Train station bathroom stalls.

"Pleased to meet you."

Keith looks up. It's an old man, hat cocked over one eye, fingers playing on a silver-capped cane. He unclasps his coat and lays it over a wooden chair.

"My name is Doctor Bombay."

"Yeah, Frank told me I'd meet you here."

"Frank...He's a good kid."

"Said you'd have something."

"It's called the Magnificent Pearl. Gives you peace of mind."

Pull the cord! Baby lands in doctor's hands. Woman screaming birth pains. Membrane shattered on legs, dripping on the floor. Call the nurse in with a vacuum hose. Don't use the good clean towels. Legs kick birth canal and split spits blood and mucous. Stomach explodes in yellow geyser white blood grey skin. Push it again. Eyes exit sockets. Genitals frozen and formed to the legs. Back bristled and cold. Sweet silly girls set fire to makeshift man.

"Keith? Keith, you awake?"

"Yeah, yeah...what do you want?"

"Hey, man, you got to go home. It's closing time."

"Oh, must've dozed off there."

"That's alright. Think you can make it home or do we need to call Marianne?"

"What? Oh, no, I'm OK."

Streets of 2AM. Light a Marlboro. Doesn't remember this sign here before. Stumbles down street. Go home or get a hit? Baptized. Thinks of Marianne with her short blonde hair and body that fills up those black dresses she digs. Matching heels slung back in stride. Well, it's better than the street with no shoes, no coat, a pipe and a light. Shattered like a spiderweb windshield. Bullethole backporch. Hope and sex on the streets alarmed with religious come-ons. A hooker looks his way and he glances her off. No time and no money and no feelings anyway.

Faithful morning light. Curl up with a blanket. Cramping pain and auto-erections. Keith's got to get up, fix it, hit it. Papa rolled the stones and mama shook me out of bed. Black jeans and jacket piled in corner.

"Marianne, you holding anything?"

"Just a Nembie."

"Can you get me a drink, whiskey or something?"

"Yeah, hang on."

Light a Marlboro.

"Here. Ease it off a bit. We gotta go. Get some money. Something."

Keith looks in his dirty cracked mirror. Flesh on stone. Love's here and gone. Hope that the heart will try.

Marianne takes off down the sidewalk looking for a hit. Keith trying to keep up. Legs cramping and stomach twisting, arms itching, burning, slowing him down. Her tattooed ankles writhe over boot heels, run into the ground with weeks and months of streets and sidewalks, subterranean pumphouses. No kinds of love could ever last long. Can't ever seem to find true love when it's almost too late and you're lying on the floor with agonizing pains and your nose running milky streams onto dry and cracked lips. Can't cop anywhere. Go to Charlie's bar, Downstairs, the Chicken Club, the 45, all the usual spots. Hit the corners and the chinks in the alleys. Keith feels it draining and finally catches Marianne.

"Hey, you go down to Nat's apartment and see if he's holding, and I'll go back up to the Black Angel and check things out."

Two men walk into the Black Angel.

"Scotch and water, please. And a Morgan's and Coke for my friend here."

"Sure thing."

Keith stares at the action from his booth by the door. No one noticed him slinking in and easing down. A Marlboro smolders in his fingertips. Warm day, but he shivers in his denim jacket, collar pulled up around the neck to block air moving in. Sweat beads on his forehead and runs down dripping off eyelids.

"Would you like a drink?"

Keith turns and looks into hollow, black eyes, smiling. Silver-capped cane.

"Keith," the bartender asks, "do you want a beer or what?"

Keith looks around the bar and sees only the bartender and the two fellows drinking at their stools.

"What? No, no thanks. I got to go."

Keith walks in the door of his room and sees Marianne nodding on the couch. A glass of water glints in the lamplight on the scarred coffee table in front of her. A small white candle sits by, still burning. He lets his coat drop by the door as he shuts it and turns the lock. He sits down on a sofa and finds the balloon next to Marianne. Needle and dropper-spoon and water-powder bubbles Mexican black-cottons-draw-band the arm—thump thump thump-dry veins needing juices-hit it once, feel it, again again again. Aim to please. Blood in streams caught in transparent dropper. Explosion at the base of the brain. Working its way down the neck, down the back in slow waves calling you to come home. Sail the ship out into the sunny, afternoon waters. Feel the waves rocking the body to sleep, full of dreams, full of denial breaking apart with a gentle caress. The foam encases the body and brings it to shore. Sand glitters and he feels that warmth on the stomach, on the thighs, on the backs of the legs, down across the feet and between the toes as he rolls around in it, letting it feel him up all over, back up the shins, the knees, parting thighs to work its way into the crotch and call to come again, automatic, blistering, beckoning. Feel it in the palms of hands as they're nailed together as great fish jump from green waves and ask things you never knew, never remember. A feeling of lightness, every muscle working to its best ability. Refusing to do anything. The body floats across the room. Out the window backwards into waiting arms to take it away to nowhere. Magdalene lays at the foot of the cross. Fingers in her eyes. Ripping her dress to shreds. Tying them in a bandage for the hands of Christ to pick up a cupful of water. Drink without spilling a single drop. Coming together. Knowing nothing. Feeling nothing. Alive.

Keith's coming off of his nod and brought around by a familiar voice. "Marianne?"

"No, I'm afraid she's gone."

Keith pulls his eyes open and looks at the figure sitting in the chair in front of him. The apartment's dark, and he feels for Marianne's hand beside him, realizing she isn't there. The small lamp by Keith puts off little light, and it's hard for him to make out who is speaking.

"You don't remember your old friend?"

"Doc?"

"Who else?"

"But."

"Yes, I know. What's going on here? Why, only what you wanted."

"But, why are you here now?"

"Because I live here, stupid," answers Marianne. "What were you mumbling about? Who, or what, is doc?"

"Gimme a cigarette." Keith looks at Marianne and the room around them, letting out a long breath.

"Sure." She hands him one as she sits down beside him on the couch, a bottle of Pepsi in her hand. "Here, have a sip. Your lips are all dried out."

Keith takes a sip of the soda and shakily lights his cigarette. What the hell was all that? he thought.

"So, are you gonna answer me or what?"

"Oh. I don't know. Can't remember." He shakes his head, takes a long draw from the cigarette and lets his head fall back against the sofa, closing his eyes and thinking.

You can't fight your way into heaven. You can't pay your way out of Hell. There's little left Keith can handle. Marianne driving him nuts. Or is it Bombay? Doesn't know anymore. Can hardly tell the difference when jonesing. Nothing left. No pride. Just lies. Marianne comes in as goddess waiting to tear Keith apart. Full veins wanting full soul to take the pain. Cheap hotel roaches crawl past and give their two cents worth of what they see everyday. Shoes in corner laugh lapping tongues. Juices run across the floor. Licking lips. Semen squash in streams and bubbles caught in translucent light for days on end. Discarded on grimy tiled bathroom floors. Bodies merge for lips longing for more. Paper goods wipe up paper trade. Newspaper scraps. Time memories. Placed in prone formation, ready for the job. Grab ankles and go together. Push it to the last cent. Run down legs and stain cheap sheets. Beckon the revolution and go for the heart, liver, lungs, brain. Flash before eyes. Man suffused with man. Look into those dark smiling eyes. Bombay rolls over to have him on top. Pants around ankles. Definition in heated moment as the blood flows from Keith's lips. Bombay commands his duties well. Shoved up the ass. Spontaneous ejaculations in the midst of cramping sickness. Hands slide over thighs in pain. Last resort of the diseased. Racking pain takes the Pearl out. Here it comes again. On top. 2 bodies come in 3 spirits. Speckled snake crawls across the grass. Into the mouth of lion waiting. Man and woman. The god and goddess. Nothing lacking. No. No! No!!

"No!!!"

"Keith, what's wrong?"

He looks into Marianne's eyes and spits up a wash of blood and black fluid, hands and legs frozen in their motions. Marianne moves off of him in disgust as the room fills with the bittersweet aroma of junk and death. Streams run across the bed in a black cherry ooze, making puddles and dripping with a smack on the floor. Keith slowly lifts an arm.

"Doc?"

Bombay stares down Keith with black laughing eyes. Nothing left but leaving. Brushes his long coat aside and takes Keith's hand. Walk past the train station quietly sleeping. Say a prayer as he comes across the dying light. Begging for return. Savior fool the devil. Look around. No love left. Unload everything. Walk through the train station turnstile. Hit the ground. Less time to listen. No time to look. Comes on fast. Nothing to save you now. Never as young as you are stupid. Look him in the eyes goddamned! Look up to him and ask him why, why? Fall down wicked and laughing on the knees. Come for the Savior in the morning. Nothing left. Nowhere to go. Cancel it all. No shadows. Engulfed in darkness. Gone. Alone.

Keith goes down to see Carlos. See if he's holding anything. Sometimes good for cheap papers. Never lucky enough to hold out for a good hand copped from him. Luck runs in small doses for a sick junkie with a burning habit. Down on money but too sick to hit up any liquor stores

or anything. Rely on handouts to pull you until you can make a decent fix. Keith slides his hands into his jeans pockets. His spike breaks through the right side near the seam at the thigh. Usually keeps it in his jacket but not thinking straight. Usually wrapped in grimy ripped rotten rag along with his spoon. Usually rests next to his breast by his smokes. Hell, can't even get a decent smoke today. Digs in his jacket and finds half a cigarette, broken at the butt. Keith tears off the filter, flicks it and lights up, trying to hold the cigarette firmly like a roach between shaking fingers. He runs a nervous hand through his greasy brown hair. Eyes and chest sunken in. Face gone pale, bloodless. Looks to his wrist, vaguely remembering the watch he'd pawned a week ago. Junkie would sell his family when sick and jonesing without the means to an end.

Keith walks on down the street. Spies the clock at the First Convenience Bank. 5:06 AM. Cold and lonely. Pass apartments, houses. See lights come on. Low-renters getting ready for the grind. Keith never sleeping because the pain's too bad. Now on the upswing of the disease. Everything slowly coming back to him. But still fighting for a fix. A cruiser comes rolling past and sees Keith taking a rest on the bricks, got to see what's up. They stop and flash their lights. Two cops come out to check Keith over. Figure they could maybe get him for possession or something. God knows, Keith's not holding anything. The two see the sickness on his face and laugh, knowing that he's going straight to hell. Jump back in to their black and white and speed off. Keith sits down on the steps of a broken down duplex. Weird, he thinks, didn't even take my spike or nothing. An old man in boxer shorts walks out of the front door.

"Can I help you?" The old man reaches down for his paper.

"Got a smoke?"

"Yep." Old guy disappears back in his house. Comes back with two cigarettes and two cups of coffee, now dressed in grey work pants and a flannel shirt. "Looks like you need both of these."

"Thanks, man." Keith shaky and nervous. Takes hold of his coffee and chokes down a bit. Old guy lights both cigarettes and passes one to Keith.

"Hope Viceroy's okay."

"Yeah." For the first time, Keith notices the old man's face. Wrinkled, beaten, with a thick mustache. Head bald on top with fender skirts curling over his ears. A small scar ran across the guy's forehead, yellowed and weathered. The old man produces a small flask from his right pants pocket.

"Want a little nip, there?"

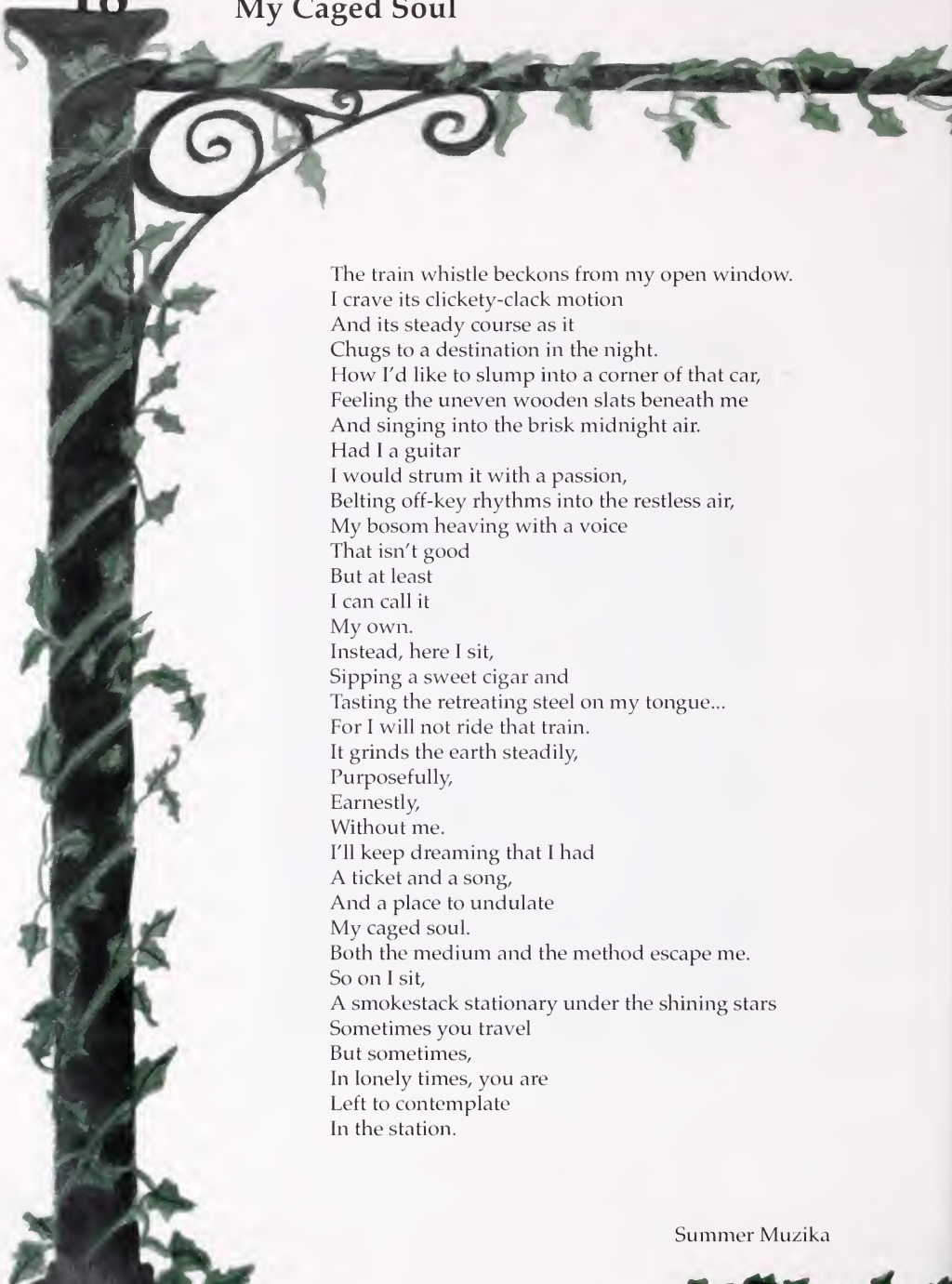
"Oh, no. Thanks, though." Keith quivers and stands, the thin rails of his frame barely making a shadow in the light coming from a single bulb over the front door.

"Suit yourself."

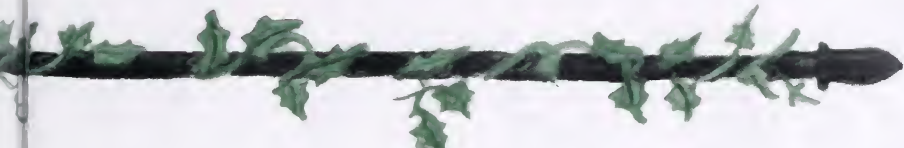
"Thanks." Keith sits the empty cup down, takes another drag on the Viceroy and turns back towards the street. Weird shit. Wait until he tells Marianne. He walks down and hits the train station. Goes in and finds an empty bathroom stall. He locks the door, curls his legs up and across the horse shoe seat, leans against the side of the stall and sleeps for the first time in five days.



Brie McCammond
photograph



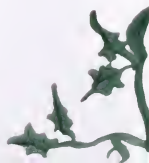
The train whistle beckons from my open window.
I crave its clickety-clack motion
And its steady course as it
Chugs to a destination in the night.
How I'd like to slump into a corner of that car,
Feeling the uneven wooden slats beneath me
And singing into the brisk midnight air.
Had I a guitar
I would strum it with a passion,
Belting off-key rhythms into the restless air,
My bosom heaving with a voice
That isn't good
But at least
I can call it
My own.
Instead, here I sit,
Sipping a sweet cigar and
Tasting the retreating steel on my tongue...
For I will not ride that train.
It grinds the earth steadily,
Purposefully,
Earnestly,
Without me.
I'll keep dreaming that I had
A ticket and a song,
And a place to undulate
My caged soul.
Both the medium and the method escape me.
So on I sit,
A smokestack stationary under the shining stars
Sometimes you travel
But sometimes,
In lonely times, you are
Left to contemplate
In the station.

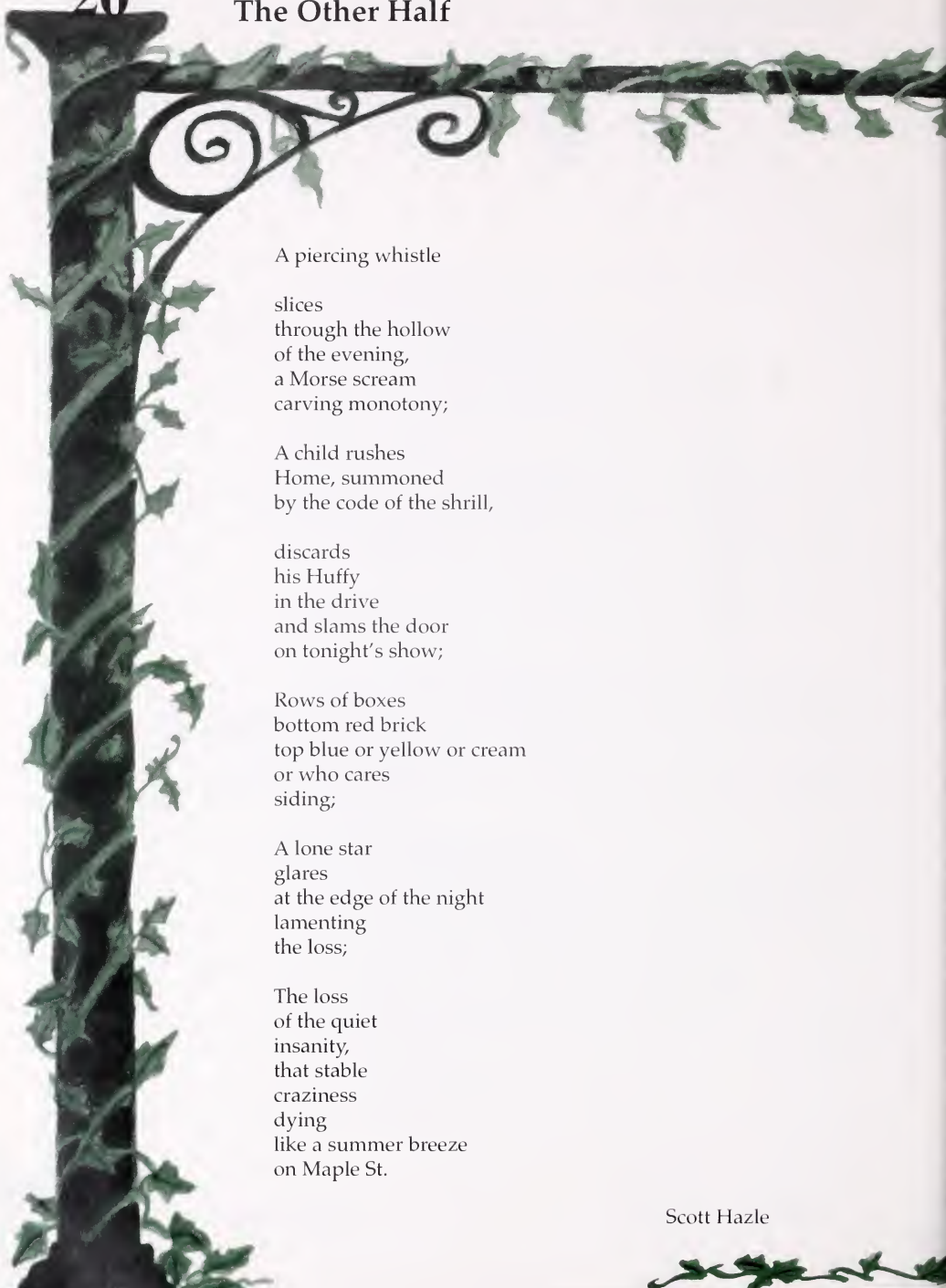


At night I still see the furrowed soil--
clay red that darkens my hands and fills my nose with its freshness--
and I hear the sound of his voice as he lay sprawled in the fields,
the young, clear voice that my mother loved to hear--
that I loved to hear--rising above all of us.
At night, he would come home with his flock,
new lamb resting on his shoulders--he came home smiling.

I still smell the sweet scent of smoke and incense--
the burning lamb and Abel's bowed shoulders;
arms tanned as brown as the dirt that I turned over again and again,
the cool of the furrows in the moonlight, damp and loving to my fingers,
eyes as blue as the cobalt of the rivers that I knelt beside to drink--
endless as the fields, vines heavy with fruit--fingers sticky with grape,
eyes burning with the wine,

dark as the blood that rose up from the ground in a silent battlecry
and rain from the Heavens washed my hands clean
of when the fruit of my envy hung low on its branches
and the fire of the altar curled up silent as snow.





A piercing whistle

slices
through the hollow
of the evening,
a Morse scream
carving monotony;

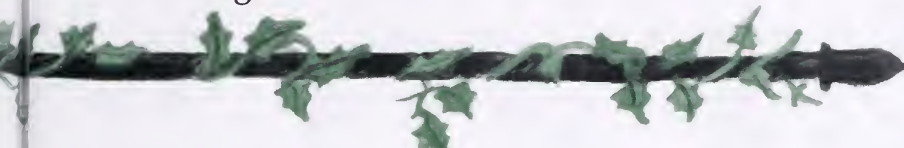
A child rushes
Home, summoned
by the code of the shrill,

discards
his Huffy
in the drive
and slams the door
on tonight's show;

Rows of boxes
bottom red brick
top blue or yellow or cream
or who cares
siding;

A lone star
glares
at the edge of the night
lamenting
the loss;

The loss
of the quiet
insanity,
that stable
craziness
dying
like a summer breeze
on Maple St.



Friday night was spent at work, waving and smiling
To passing students (my only brush with life and sanity)
Then Mister came, throwing arguments like confetti
Asking me for a picture, an argument, so I drew a rainbow
Crisp sloping lines separating each color, a child's drawing.

His hands reached out. One ripped, one drew and he smirked
While explaining how mine was incorrect, and his perfection.
His rainbow's vague bleeding colors reminded me nothing
Of childhood, of pots of gold, of mother stopping the car in West Virginia
So we could absorb the ribbon of color that back-dropped the mountains.

I squint up at this man who missed childhood and its rainbows
Whose life was shades of gray, while mine was black and white.
Reality could never accept my dreams of leprechauns, griffins and crisp lines.

On the Way to Hune Bridge

A decorative black metal post and arch structure, heavily covered in green ivy leaves and vines, frames the left side and top of the page. The post is vertical, and the arch curves over the text area.

Driving up Route 26
through foothills patterned
with family graveyards,
town hall shacks,
and one-room churches.

Past turkeys,
goats and mares,
cattle and geese
populating a tidy farm,
mud and manure invisible
from the roadside--
Gloved hands
acknowledge a city girl's gawking.

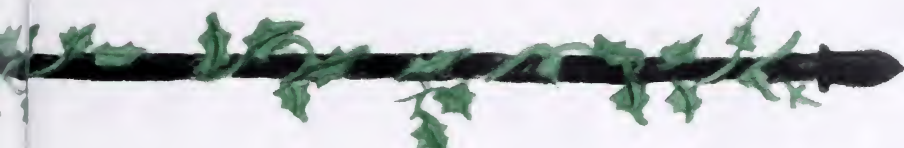
In Sitka I stop.
A faded general store perched on a field,
pick-up trucks door to door
in a muddy lot.
There's no post office;
locals claim their mail here
as they buy their bread.
I fail to convince myself
to "go in and say Hi!"
as the tourist sign urges.

A boarded-up estate on the right.
A vine-covered marker
tells the structure's tale:
built and sold,
sold again;
a foolish, neglected
bed and breakfast promise.
I would stay a night
or two in Sitka
but only in a front room.

Across the gravel road
a skinny barn
straddles a lazy river.
Inside I imagine
horseshoes and wagon wheels
sounding on loose planks of wood.
Beyond a sheet metal sky
darkness advances,
sealing me within a forgotten town
suspended between corn and pines.

Jessica L. Vaughan

A small decorative branch with green leaves and vines, located at the bottom right corner of the page.

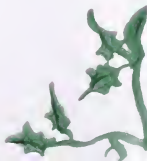


We are green under water, glittering with the fall of the waves--
flesh and bone--naked and hidden by the reeds of the bank.
The smell of hyanthus lingered in my nose
and our necks curved together like swans in the moonlight;
You crowned me with your amber eyes
and I was a princess.

Time slips through my fingers and I am weightless,
floating on top of the water, turning round and round like a lodestone,
a weathervane that dances in the wind.
I spread my wings.

The night was silent and we walked until there was no path to lead us home,
wrestling like angels in the fields where my grandmother gathered fruit for her pies.
The apples were in bloom then and we filled our baskets heavy--
cat steps in the grass--silky toes on the coals of afternoon.

The sky swelled like an open wound and we made love in the hush of twilight,
the voices of night calling after me in the same old largo--
katy-did, katy-didn't--
he loves me, he loves me not.



Eyes connect. Eyes diverge. Eyes connect.
Eyes diverge with a thunderous clash.

One pair embarks upon an emotional journey,
Through an almost forgotten past.
A past which beckons the other pair to join.

They too follow - both pairs fantasize about the journey.
It had originally taken place in an instant,
but its impacts and impressions were rich,
engulfing.

This time the journey hastens its pace.
Eyes connect again - tacitly agreeing on the journey's beauty.
Both pairs forget the journey's pain.
Unfrightened eyes soothe those which are frightened,
offering shelter from the instantaneous journey,
and all uncertain futures.

No more divergence.

Both pairs of eyes appear intrepid.
They blink in time - like a wondrous orchestra -
violins challenging tympani,
flutes romancing trombones,
The conductor who magically keeps the precise meter,
is Time itself.

Is Time itself.

It is Time which dictates the harmony.
Eyes connect.
The next journey begins.

It too will be only an instant. Four eyes blink at once. And then silence.
Four eyes blink at once.
And then silence.

Time is the conductor. Four eyes blink at once. And then silence.

The conductor beckoned no one.

Four eyes blink at once. And then silence. Four eyes blink at once.



Richard Sewell
oil on canvas
3' x 2'



Dave Detrich
sculpture



Andrew Long
urine, vitamins



Julie Barlow
mixed media, membrane
21"x 21" x 1.5" (detail)



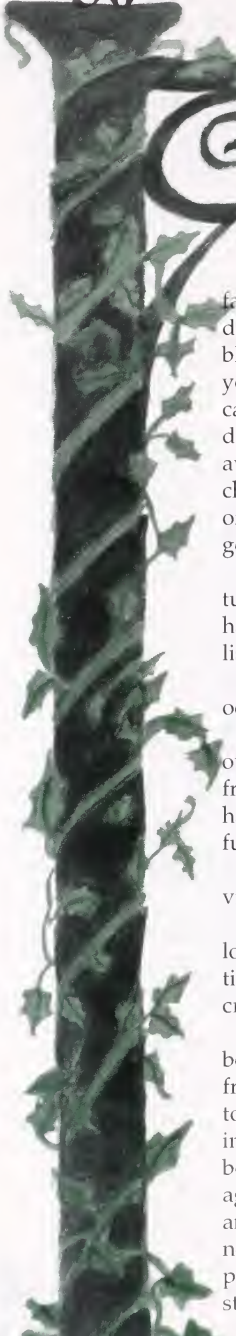
Poet, partial to daydreams and autumn leaves
and jellybeans-especially red, no black, please;
caught between worlds, countries, types,
sides of the brain;
intrigued by French and Russian,
motion and abstraction,
Moliere and Emerson,
Descartes and Ginsberg,
Thoreau and Kant,
peanut butter and jelly;

Poet, of nondescript hair and nondescript eyes
and a heart only described as descript,
smells of perspiration
and too much cologne,
fatigue, and the frustration of living
in a world overrun by tireless realists;

Poet, possessing one Jiminy Cricket
hopping mercilessly from shoulder to shoulder
chirping
alternately loved and ignored,
the woeful cries of unknown
personal revolutions;

Poet, evidence
of intellectual upbringing
hanging close to the hip-
the only weapon the pen,
the greatest asset silence,
alone
on a philosophical battleground;

Poet, wandering unchecked
through rows of fresh-grown passion
in the Garden of Dreams,
passion for life, for love,
for a masculine verb,
for a feminine metaphor,
for beaches and mountains,
for the invigorating smell
of ink-well victories,
for the triumph of the word,
for just one sip
of immortality;



Jacob Kinkaid drew himself up a little taller and heaved his chest out a little farther, which is a funny thing for a big man to do when talking to a little girl. She didn't seem impressed. Her bottom lip quivered ever so slightly and her eyes blinked dolefully, the calculated gesture they both knew meant "I'm going to cry you don't let me." The big man looked at the racks of brown and orange and red candy bars, the stacks of gum on either side of him. He turned his gaze carefully down at his daughter, her eyes already beginning to water just a little. He looked away when a single tear welled up over her blond eyelash and spilled down her cheek, turning his gaze to the rows of housewives behind him and beside him, all of them with neat stacks of coupons in their hands and quiet children tugging gently at their pants legs.

The woman in line behind him was studying the scene intensely. When he turned around to put the candy bar the little girl had been clutching in her tiny hands back on the rack, she drew back a few steps and began scanning her grocery list.

"Please, daddy...please?" She began crying, quiet sobs racking her body like ocean waves.

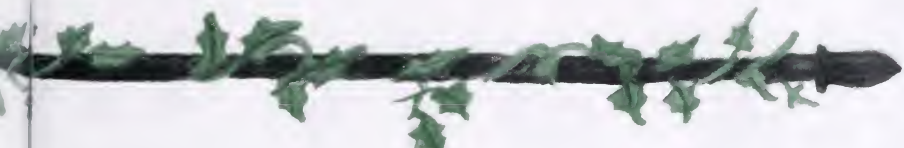
"Darlin', please be quiet," he said, pleading, his wide shoulders hunched over her as he knelt in front of her on one knee. He remembered his wife turing from the stove, a greasy frying pan in her hand, reminding him again not to let her have any candy before supper. "How about some chewing gum?" he asked hopefully.

No, she did not want any chewing gum she said by shaking her head so violently her little body had no choice but to follow suit. "I wanna candy bar."

His eyes fell to the floor as he shook his head slowly. She began to cry louder and he could feel a dozen pair of eyes turn on him without a sound. Her tiny fists began to beat on his hard shoulders and hammer at his chest, and her cries became screams as he clutched her to him and picked her up.

When he looked up he saw the cashier waiting for him and felt the women behind him fidgeting impatiently. Slowly he began unloading his cart with his own free arm. Hi-my-name-is-Marsha smiled at him and asked just how he was doing today. He looked at her hopelessly, managed a half-hearted smile and kept unloading his cart. She kept smiling at him as she ran boxes and jars and packets and bottles over the scanner, her small, shining brown eyes watching him hold the child against his chest and watching the little girl pound at him absently with one arm and hug him close with the other, her face buried in his shoulder where his thick neck grew out of the unbuttoned collar of his gray work shirt. Her fist gave up its pounding and fell to grabbing at his chest where "Carolina Oil Company" was stitched in dark red letters. She had stopped screaming and was crying softly





through ragged breaths.

He kept unloading, picking up a box of cereal (the one with the prize inside) and placing it on the register's black, chicken blood and spilled vinegar stained belt. When he picked up the last item, a carton of cigarettes, his fumbling fingers would not hold on and he dropped it, scattering ten packs of Camels at his feet. He stooped to pick them up and banged the little girl's head on the handle of the buggy. She began to scream in force again, each scream echoing off the white checkered linoleum and down the aisles. He patted her head, smoothing her blond curls for a few moments before hurriedly raking all the packs back into the box and putting it on the belt.

She was still screaming, her tears making the side of his hot, red-flushed face shiny under the antiseptic light when the cash register made a long awkward beep. Hi-my-name-is-Marsha looked perplexed for a moment before looking up from her register and back into his face.

"Do you know how much this is?" she asked apologetically, holding a jar of mayonnaise and barely audible over the screaming.

He looked instinctively and hopefully at the women behind and around him, but they were all arranging their stacks of coupons. "I don't know. I don't think I looked," he told her, hearing women behind him clucking softly. "Just forget it. I'll get it later."

"No, it's okay. It'll only take a minute," she said soothingly, and before he had a chance to disagree she pulled the intercom phone up beside her sallow face and her voice filled the store. "I need a price check on register six," she intoned, her soft, pleasing voice rendered shrill and mechanical.

He stood in front of her, patting futilely on the child's back and whispering in her ear. He could feel their eyes on him harder now, and felt his face burn hot red and a single cold bead of sweat roll slowly down his back. Finally, a skinny boy with eyeglasses that made his eyes jump off his face and a green striped vest that revealed his name to be Steve came and picked up the jar of mayonnaise from the cashier. He studied it carefully for a few seconds and started off toward the back of the store, getting only a few steps away before stopping and turning around.

"Where's this stuff at?" he mouthed in a sullen and tedious voice over the now level sound of the little girl's screaming.

She pointed the way and he was off once again. The little girl screamed and the big man fidgeted nervously, shifting his weight from one foot to the other. He could feel the eyes still burning into him with cool detachment and could feel them growing impatient. He caught snatches of their conversation whenever the little girl in his arms stopped to take a ragged breath.

"...one of mine would know better than to pull a scene like that. I..." said a righteous voice behind him.



"...so I always know the price of everything I'm buying. I've been there too many times..."

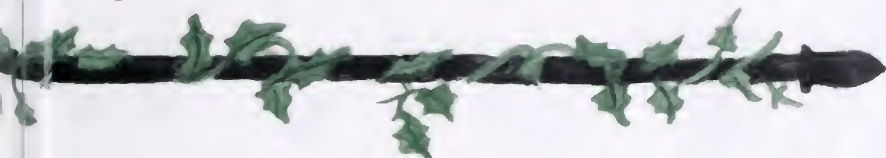
Finally the boy came plodding back to the line, announcing to the cashier that the mayonnaise was on sale for a dollar and thirty-nine cents. She smiled and Jacob shifted his loudly disapproving daughter to his other arm to rest his wallet. He handed the cashier the money and she paused for a second.

"Are you going to use those?" she asked, gesturing to his hand.

He looked sheepishly down to the twisted mass of coupons that his wife had given him as he was leaving wadded damply in his big clammy palm and handed them to her. She laid them down on the register and flattened each one out carefully. She studied them for a few seconds and handed one of them back to him.

"Here. This one's out of date."

He stuffed it in his pocket and paid her. The register drawer jarred open and she handed him his change and receipt, which were quickly jammed closed with the expired coupon. He dropped his bags into the cart and pushed out the door, the little girl screaming the whole way, and out into the fading orange sun.



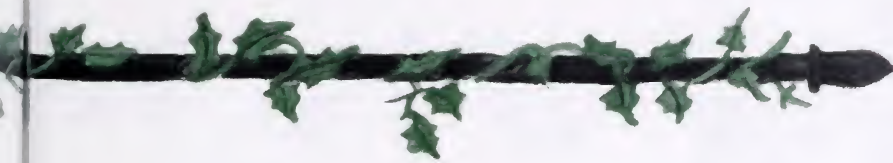
Ann Buckwalter
photograph





Scrape.
Scrape.
Have you ever
Scrape.
Sat in a cemetery
Scrape.
Running a cool blade
Scrape.
Over your wrist
Scrape.
Contemplating
Scrape.
Whether to apply
Scrape.
A bit of pressure
Scrape.
And break the skin
Scrape.
Hello?
Scrape.
Does anyone hear me?
Scrape.
Or am I being
Scrape.
Fucking ignored?
Scrape. Scrape.
I hope someone
Scrape.
Has done this before
Scrape.
So that I'm
Scrape.
Not alone.
But you know
Scrape.
To be a *pioneer*
Scrape.
And forge ahead
Scrape.

Past this "Brave New World"
Scrape.
May reap
Scrape.
Its own rewards.
Drip.
My skin absorbs
Drip.
The drizzling rain;
Drip.
The leaden sky
Drip.
Is pissing on me.
Drip. Drip.
I swallow the rain
Drip.
The way the earth
Drip.
Swallows the blood.
Drip.
There's so much earth
Drip.
And so little of me
Drip.
That I will hardly
Drip.
Whet its appetite.
Drip. Drip.
I apologize
Drip.
That I
Drip.
Will not
Drip.
Quench
Drip.
Your thirst
Drip.
Nor satisfy



Drip.
Your hunger.
Drip. Drip.
I cannot be
Drip.
All
Drip.
Those things
Drip.
I should've been
Drip.
But
Drip.
At least
Drip.
I can be
Drip.
A pioneer.

The curtain fell and applause resounded, in honor of our little pioneer.



Teresa Van Hatten
photograph



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Submit:

Chronicle is a reflection of you! Show us your creative side and submit!

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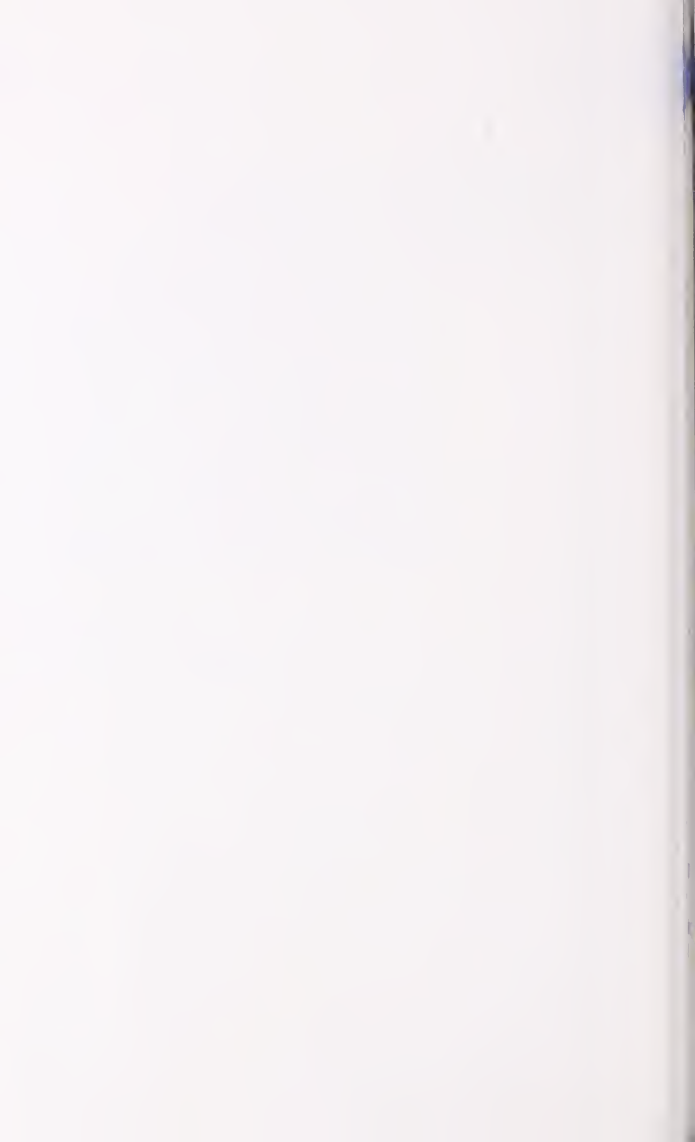
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What Big Girls Are Made Of

Jessica Vaughan

She saved the first grade family portrait,
drawn by chubby hands
pressing burnt orange crayon
on a paper plate;
We share a laugh
at her Olive Oyl figure
towering over Dad and I.

“Has anyone ever told you that you look like Cher?”
She really does
with her long legs and dark curls,
though you’ll never catch her in spandex
and Dad’s the one with the tattoo.

2

“Your daughter must look like your husband.”
A tight smile and curt nod –
please, don’t remind her.
Round-faced and big-boned,
thank God I got her height.

“I just don’t want you to turn out like your cousins.”
But Mom. . .
She writes the check,
ignores my protests;
Chrissy eats a chunk of cheddar
and I get sent to fat classes.

den

m Lewis

He walked, slow with alcohol
and stumbled sidewalk-curb
at an alley side store,
with neon call girl above,
and hairy backed bouncer,
barked over price,
and landed in bar stool seats,
smoke laminated walls,
and disco lights on an 8 foot stage.
Waitress, beer, tip-again.
Music loud and unfamiliar,
voice loud and over that:
"Please welcome Adam and Eve!"
Applause died off,
sip, a drag, and more music.
They came in black leather,
and stripped - tossing pants,
and bra, and g-strings.
Naked - they moved together.
He with green snake tattoo,
she with hazel hair.
More music, and the act began.
Sweat and skin smell,
Someone yells, a whistle:
They fucked like animals.
The stage was their garden.
and sex no forbidden fruit.
He gaped with disbelief,
and the music stopped,
they picked up their leather,
and hurried off.

Single Yellow Dahlia

Jessica E. Proctor

It was an unusually warm spring day. The sights and sounds of the season, of new life, filled the air. As the young man of seventeen sat quietly on the church pew, he could catch a glimpse of the churchyard through a baseball-sized hole in a nearby stained glass window. He spied butterflies and baby birds dancing through the cloudless sky. The whole world seemed to be alive and continuing on outside of the tiny country church, but inside something else was occurring. The young man absently listened to a pastor read a eulogy. Inside this church, the congregation was mourning the death of this young man's mother. Inside this church, the dark cloud of death cast a consuming shadow over the newness of spring.

4

Sitting there in a state of confusion and incredible disbelief, the young man attempted to use his thoughts to drown out the various sounds of mourning echoing through the church. It was too unbearably cruel for him, now orphaned, to think about his mother's dying seconds on the emergency room operating table. It was too disheartening for him to sit in God's house dwelling on how unjust he thought God was, prematurely taking both parents from him. Having lost his father to prostate cancer when he was five years old, and now his mother from a head-on collision in her late-model sedan with an oak tree just blocks from their home, were too much to bear. The words the deputy sheriff on the scene kept ringing in his ear: "Apparent cause of accident: brake failure."

Rather than dwell on all this sadness, the young man searched deep in his thoughts for a special memory he held of his mother. The corners of his mouth slowly turned up when he thought of a pleasure from his childhood. He thought of the flower, a single yellow dahlia, his mother wore in her long, wavy chestnut brown locks. The young man cherished this particular memory more than others because it also involved his father, a man he had few vivid memories of. When his father grew gravely ill from his cancer, when the young

man was just a boy of four years, his mother began wearing the flower in her hair. This was an attempt to brighten the dying man's spirits. At the time, the young boy did not understand the significance of the flower. However, years later, just moments before he was about to go out on his first date, his mother explained it to him.

On a mild October evening, two years prior to the present, the mother and son sat on the front porch steps talking about first loves. The woman recalled her relationship with her late husband. The young man learned that nearly twenty years prior to this conversation, in the warmth of a late July sunset, his father proposed to his mother on the very same steps they were sitting on. His father knelt down on one knee, held out a single yellow dahlia, and blurted out, "sweetie, will you spend eternity with me?" Not having a lapel to place the flower in, his mother slid the dahlia's stem between some locks of hair entwined in a braid, and tackled him in a bear hug, obviously accepting his proposal. The couple never had an engagement ring, just a single yellow dahlia. Every two days, right up to the day they actually walked down the aisle of the same tiny country church the young man was sitting in at present, his father brought his fiancée a new yellow dahlia to replace the previous one before it could die. He maintained that as long as that single yellow dahlia lived, and was worn in the young woman's hair for God and everyone else to see, so would their undying love for each other.

Knowing the significance this single yellow dahlia had between them, the woman began wearing it in her hair again to offer him some reassurance. She wanted her husband to know that she would be okay after he passed on. She would always have that single yellow dahlia, therefore she would always have his love. The young man contemplated the various images he had in his mind of his mother wearing this flower in her hair. The image of her patiently feeding his father meals in the hospital bed they had moved into the house drifted into his mind. This image brought a reality with it the young man could now relate to. He finally understood the undying

love his mother had for his father, and the desperation she must have felt while watching her first love slowly wither away into nothingness. He had discovered a new empathy for his mother. Suddenly, strange as it may sound, like his mother had had with his father, he wished he was afforded the opportunity to take care of her and offer that same reassurance that he, too, would be okay once she passed. Instead, she was ripped from him, leaving him unsure of his future and leaving her nothing more than a memory, much like that of the single yellow dahlia.

Slowly his attention drifted from his thoughts and back to the activities of the church. Before the young man had a chance to realize his actions, he, nearly mesmerized, shuffled up to his mother's open casket and propped himself up against the side of it. Then, from an assorted flower arrangement within arm's reach of the casket, he plucked a single yellow dahlia and carefully slid it into his mother's

lightly graying hair. He paid careful attention to slide it just above her ear, where he remembered seeing her wear it all those many years ago. Peering down at the lifeless woman who had been his world since his father passed away twelve years prior, the young man managed a faint smirk. Before turning to walk back to the pew, he clutched the woman's dainty and frigid hand. In a quiet voice, so quiet only he and his mother could hear his words, the young man told her, "There you go Mama. Now you are ready for Papa in eternity. I love you. Always."

In the Orchard, After Harvest

Holf Parker

Being entwined on a pile of apple leaves with you
on the hill in full moonlight, a fragile hint of
violet on the snow, and blues, hues of an
ever present sun, shadows, on bare trees at midnight.

Delicate moonlight failed to warm
our cold noses and fingers but
each of us was happy to climb and
sleaze under the stars, like children in winter.

Light lover
Come
tasting
Iunk
i love
each time
Iank

the warmth of you rose to greet me with a laugh.

("Help me with my mittens", you said with a chuckle,
"I need my fingers for this, not just my hands.")

I learned how easily the cold air affected you, how your
whole body shivered even after I kissed you.

What I didn't know
that yet couldn't know, was how very
sensitive you also were
to fear, and to
feelings, and to
devotion.

The Narrow Bed

Summer Muzika

I want to go to that place
Where the dish towel hangs
The stove light stays on and
The white walls speak of simplicity
I want to be where Fenway Park is a daydream
And jazz is a venture
The toilet seat is never down and
Afternoon light filters through the blinds
I want to sleep in the narrow bed
Close to him, the one I love,
Alternately sweating and shivering
Because the air conditioner's
Too much or we just
Made love.
I want to get back there
Cause this place is not my home
It's my terminal for change,
for growth,
for maturity,
for everything I need to do on my own.
He is my home.
I want to go to him as
Perfection; no I'm not perfect but
If I care and
Defeat the apathy
Then I am admirable and he
Will be proud of me.
I want to sleep in his bed,
His savior-love goddess
Who is wholesome
And deep
And warm.

ocks

ike White

weather-worn door
anding still in cool baby blueness
eeling paint to the floor
silent self-destruction.

9

ex Haiku

ooddy Muire

nipples in moonlight
tongue swirls like a galaxy
painting red mountains

AFTER LEVITICUS AND BEFORE DEUTERONOMY

Rolf Parker

10

This town has
12 bars and
1 paperback bookstore
and more than 20,000 students.
Doesn't that strike you as odd?
Does each student take a number
and wait till it's his or her turn to browse a book?
Is that why the Newsroom is never full?
A German like orderliness preventing stampedes and chaos
at the bookstore?
Reading the score card in the big concrete stadium
we all know and love
is not the same as reading Elizabeth Kubler-Ross.
The man with the iguana who used to work at the coffee shop
(one of two, count 'em)
said it best:
"This town ruins everything"

The Black Rat, the local head shop
("Those carved pipes are for tobacco only")
will sell you a hookah and a black light poster of Bob
looking stoned as an old testament adulterer,
as fried as KFC
but will call the cops if they think you smell
like de ganja, ya come de police mon, take dat bum away.

Does that man with the iguana, the one who later worked
at that Mexican restaurant with the good beer,
that place that failed in about a year, does he still
live in this state?
Or did he vanish, like those two other bookstores

(V)

it used to struggle here, but withered and died.
le the fig tree that offended Jesus,
le a brain damaged man in a coma,
whose feeding tube has been removed.
Ging once, bye, bye,
ging twice, lights out,
gne bankrupt, closing sale
toks half price but no one is buying
ey're at the bar, again and again and again, stepping over
the vomit of Christian freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors
it forms puddle-lakes of half digested fire on the sidewalk.
The bar men cause the Great Deluge to come out of a garden hose
grifying the land with a flood of tap water
tt after forty minutes
ad forty minutes more
t: streets still smell like Lazarus did
c the third day.
On you tell I've been here too long?
We were not meant for each other.
Ey me a book, if you can find one
cl me a snob
ad send me the fuck home

For John Janci Ketner

in the deep pre-orgasmic stillness
of a rare waking thought
revelation startles me:

space is immaterial
and time does not exist

as the impulses in my brain approach the speed of light
in a screaming asymptotic struggle,
(my friend Einstein was right because)
time slows to a fraction of its usual crawl

and my brain perfects itself,

each neuron swelling to the dimension of a supernova until

i am eternal. galaxies swim in my eyes and fly from my lips. . .

and eating the space-time continuum for breakfast,

i perhaps slurp my milky way a bit too loudly,

for God (or Someone) has certainly noticed me:

i feel eyes upon me, and the associated guilt

(the way I feel on the street in my short dress

when the men gaze with a prickly combination of lust and contempt

and my hands itch to touch me in sweet and forbidden places --

or perhaps to cover my eyes

and like a child i hurry my step

welcoming not their appraisal but the familiar

spin of the earth on its questionable axis, the pseudo-perpetual

glow of the sun, the trembling of the stars) as

my neural pathways

infuse them with kinetic grace until they spin

dervish-style

around my delusions of grandeur

Dr Janci John Joyner

Two galaxies collided last night,
and a strange knowledge
delivered
a twisted refraction of light upon
the reflecting pond
became too dear to me
and was amazing
like your asymptotic struggle
as you told me about star gazing
as the eyes glazing over
and under
a moment named wonder

and dismember,
if you can,
the concentric circles of my eyes
from nebulae
from web of nerves
and spacial shadows
being shallow but mad with loose sparks
a noontime joy,
look deep enough and you will
find a boy
swimming in stars

you know about it
in the theory of relativity

in past times pulsing druidly
and languidly in the beginning,
every atom
waiting to draw a conclusion

in the first passion
of our young scientist friend

and it
never
feels

I'm Sliding

Tim Lewis

Not like life –
or air winding out of lungs –
not much like color splash on canvas,
or that last drip of ice cream
on a sunburst july noon.
I crossed silent and slow,
as deep purple fading black
or a Sunday morning;
a whisper in a canyon,
an ember in a jar.
Forget light and playground sand.
Not a splash in the waves,
not a needle in the hay.
Think more of Lazarus,
who died twice,
of a grandfather,
and your own death.

The Room

Keith Darnell

"Sean, would you come help me," She asked.

"Sure, I'll be there in just a second," Sean replied. "I've just got to finish this paragraph first."

"I didn't mean that I needed the help later," She snapped, "I need the help NOW!"

Sean took a deep breath, looked up at the patterned ceiling,

"I don't care if you don't want to spend the extra money on these light fixtures. I'm going to do it, anyway! Mom always said you were cheap. I don't know why I didn't listen to her!"

and then drugged into the living room.

"I'm sorry, honey. What's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong. I just need you to sign this check for that coat I looked at the other day."

"Where are your checks?"

"Why should I need a job just to get my own checking account? Why can't you just give me some money every week?"

"I forgot to order some more. Can't you just sign the check?"

Sean accepted the pen thrust in his face, and signed his name to the bottom of his flowery check. He looked back up at his wife and handed Her back his pen.

"Thanks. I'll be back after you've already gone to bed. Don't wait up on me."

Sean nodded his head in understanding, and stood watching after Her as She grabbed a coat from the closet.

"Of course I need another coat. Why don't you just quit asking why I need these things?"

and headed out to the car.

After She was gone, Sean looked at his watch. Two o'clock in the afternoon. Where was She going to be for the next ten hours? What was he going to do until then?

Maybe he could get some more writing finished.

He walked back into his study, and sat at his large oak desk.

This was Sean's retreat.

It was decorated like a prestigious college professor's office; Sean liked the look. A large, leather chair rested behind his desk, and a green, glass desk lamp was perched on top of the table. There were hundreds of books looking out from the shelves along the walls, and a free-standing suit of armor, wielding a

large ax, protected all the stories. There was a fireplace on another wall, and Sean usually found himself prodding the embers when he couldn't think of anything to write.

There were a couple of impressionistic paintings of inspiring landscapes hanging on either side of the fireplace, and one large painting behind his desk of a lone, free eagle circling above the mountains. There was only one window, but it overlooked a small hill, blanketed with an open field, in the middle of which stood an old, lanky oak tree.

Besides the important objects in his study, Sean also kept a computer on his desk for his writing, and a small picture of himself and his wife taken when they were still dating, and standing, laughing on top of a high mountain, back dropped only by the sky.

Sean sat softly down in his chair, and focused on the picture.

"I love you, too! Oh, yes! You know I'll marry you! Oh, Sean, I love you so much!"

"It'll be great; we'll be able to hike like this whenever we want to, and we'll be able to kiss each other each morning when we wake up! Oh, Sean, I can hardly wait!"

Sean had loved Her more than anything that afternoon when they had a passing forest ranger take their picture. In fact, he still loved Her more than anything. At times he felt as though She demanded too much out of him,

"Sean, it's that simple. Either you never talk to your mother again, or you never talk to me again. You make the choice."

but at other times he couldn't imagine life being any better.

"Oh, come here, poor thing. It'll be okay, dear. Someone soon will love you as much as I do, and will publish one of your books, I just know it. There now, it'll be okay. Come here and let me hold you."

He had made the decision long ago that She was the right one for him, and he had devoted all of his trust and love to making their life together a success.

She was his first, true love...the first girl he actually kissed. They had a few problems in the beginning, but Sean had just assumed those were normal in a relationship.

He still didn't know any better.

He had lost a lot of friends because he refused to listen to their "wisdom." He believed they were jealous because he had found a woman that was right for him, and they were still hanging out at the mall.

So he abandoned them, and dedicated himself to Her.

And he was still confident that he had made the right decision.

They had been married for five years, and it had been anything but easy. Most of his friends had gotten married, eventually, and they claimed to be happy

Whenever he passed them in public. However, Sean suspected they were being as tough a time with the institution as he was, and were just too cowardly to admit it.

But Sean really thought he was happy. He continued to hope that he would soon get published, and She continued to encourage him.

She was very gentle when Sean approached Her with a problem, and he felt as though he had found a true soul mate in Her. Their love life was just as alive as it had been on their honeymoon. Of course, the hikes, which Sean desperately needed to remain sane, had dwindled to once a year. But that was okay because in between grading papers and making lesson plans, he wrote a lot about being in the woods and living with Nature.

In fact, he was currently working on a short piece for an outdoors magazine in Canada. He had always been able to get these little articles published, it was books he was concerned about. But this story needed to be mailed by the next day, so he decided to turn his attention back to the unnerving, blinking cursor.

He wrote for several hours as the sun dropped to throw its warmth through the window. He often stopped and watched the shadow of the knight's ax slash across his books towards him. Then he would shake the ramblings out of his head and concentrate again on the infernal cursor.

He had always been taught that revision was crucial to a good story, but he was never very good at it. Once he had committed his idea to paper, it always seemed to stay that way. No matter how hard he worked to change it, it was as though he didn't want to; he thought it was probably because he trusted his first thoughts, and didn't want to risk messing them up by second guessing himself.

He figured his instincts were good enough to make that a logical stance.

After stopping to grade a few of those horrible essays from his students, Sean dozed off to sleep a little after dinnertime.

'No! No! Go away! I promise I'll never do it again! Just leave me alone!'
'I've got to run. They're not going to stop. I wish I could see. "Ouch!" I wonder what that was?'

Maybe there will be help. Maybe I can help myself. Wait. Think about this. There is a solution.

"Ouch!"

Geez, there it was again. Okay, maybe if I lie down they won't be able to see me. There, that's much better.

Wait. I can hear them. They're getting closer. They must know I'm here. But I can't run anymore. I've got to stay here and hope they don't see me. I can't see anything, how can they see me?

Their drums are getting closer. I can hear the clanging of their shields. Oh, please don't let them find me.

They're almost here. I can hear their heavy breathing; their blood thirsty breathing. Their hearts are beating so loudly. Why can I not hear my own heart? Oh God! He sees me!

"No. . ."

Sean jerked awake, and looked wildly around the room. Sweat dripped from his forehead, and his breathing was heavy. But slowly he drew in his breath as realized he had been having a bad dream. Slowly. . . slowly. . . he took in each breath. . . calmly now. . . he sat back down in his chair, braced himself on his desk, slowly drifted back into reality, and looked around his cold, dark study.

Sean leaned over and flipped on the desk lamp.

The light came on, but the room still felt dark.

But Sean felt that way all the time, so he checked his watch and was amazed how long he had been asleep. She would be back any minute now.

He flipped the desk lamp back off, and headed out to get a snack and find his way to bed. In the kitchen, he put together the perfect meal: a peanut butter sandwich and some Doritos.

He was half finished with the sandwich when he heard Her car pull into the driveway. A minute later She was fumbling with the lock, and he heard Her cor in the front door.

"Sean, what are you still doing up?"

"I'm just grabbing a bite to eat. I'm getting ready to go to bed. Did you have a good time?"

"Yes, thanks...what are you doing eating that junk? I don't care how much you like it, that stuff's bad for you. Besides, I've told you a thousand times not to snack. Why can't you listen?"

"I'm sorry. Look, let's just go to bed. I'm full, anyway."

"Alright. I'm going on. You clean up your mess before you come."

"Okay, I'll be there in a minute."

Sean began clearing away his mess, wondering to himself why Her hair was disheveled. But he dismissed the thought, remembering it had been a windy day. After throwing away the last of his sandwich, Sean turned out the kitchen light and groped his way through the darkness to their bedroom.

She was waiting on him there, and Sean remembered why he loved her so much. She was so beautiful, and Sean forgot all horrors as Her hands pulled him to Her, and She seduced him.

Late into the night, Sean finally fell asleep.

Sean couldn't see. He was surrounded by darkness, and it was absolute. He was absolutely blind. He reached out and groped for some support, but he could find nothing in this apparent void. There was nothing to hold on to, and there was no way of knowing if any help were coming. Sean suddenly became overwhelmed

with a sense of abandonment. He felt like someone had led him by the hand into this room, had made him feel comfortable, and had then fled. And now Sean was alone, in total darkness, with no knowledge of any potential help.

So he screamed; he needed some help; he needed someone to be there to show him the way out. Left in this horrible blackness, he would probably lose his mind. He hated not knowing what was in front of him, but what had driven him to this point? What had made him helpless and alone? Someone had intentionally put him in this room, and, thinking about it, Sean began to feel angry at Her. He was furious that anyone would lead him into such a bleakness, and then leave him there. Why would anyone want to do that? Why was there no one to help? He didn't deserve this. All he had ever done was hold his hurt out for Her. What had happened to it?

Then he heard another scream. Was it his echo? Was it Her? Was it a monster? No, he didn't think it was any of those. It was a blood curdling scream, and in the total darkness that drowned Sean he could feel nothing but fear. He forgot his anger; he could find no help, so he forgot his logic, and he screamed again.

That was the end. Sean could now feel hands pressing closer towards him. He couldn't even see his own hands, but he could sense others. And he could hear the screams. Was this Hell? What was happening?

Sean forgot to grope, and he began to run. He ran frantically through the black void. He screamed and he screamed, but no help came. He stumbled across invisible shapes heaped around the darkness. He heard screams and he pleaded at his hair. He was losing it, but he couldn't stop it. This wasn't his first fall, but this was now his fall. Where was the help? Was he not screaming loudly enough?

Then Sean tripped. He screamed. He never hit the ground. He fell downward, downward, downward. He flailed his arms and twisted his legs, but he still continued falling.

She rolled over, and realized Sean wasn't in bed. She figured he must not have been able to sleep and had gone to write some more. She got up and walked towards his study. As She neared the room, She saw the door was closed, and then She heard a scream. She ran to the door and threw it open. The room was completely dark, so She flipped on the light. She heard another scream from somewhere, somewhere far away.

Where was Sean?

What was that scream?

What was happening?

Then She saw him. But his eyes were no more than a vacant stare and She realized that, Oh God, he was gone.

The Leaves Are Screaming

Angi Taylor

The leaves are screaming at me again
something about I can't be a woman
in this world anymore.

The other day the daffodils were
laughing at my femininity
so I'm not sure if I ever
could have been one.

My Barbie dolls won't play tea
they'd rather fight with G.I. Joe
and they scoff because I once
dreamed of knights in shining armor
sweeping me onto white horses
or cowboys saving me from scalping injuns
or that tall, dark stranger
untying me from the railroad ties
just in the nick of time.

But my prince charming didn't knock
or even call
or so much as leave me a
morning-after-see-you-never note,
which is better than nothing I guess.

After all, they're the ones
who like white dresses, hair curly
red nails and make-up like its not even there
God forbid you don't shave your legs.

But what does it matter if I'm a girl
if I'm a woman, if I am female
or ma'am or lady,

Barbie's gone to fight and shave her curls
and I think I saw her nylons
in the trash can the other day.

Se wants to be strong and respected and wants
what every hardworking man
deserves.

And women hurt their husbands
because they aren't treated like women

And women hurt men
because they aren't treated like men

And men yell and scream and say
"Don't play like girls"

but that confuses me more

because I want to be like girls

I'm supposed to be like girls

But I don't know if there is room left
for women in this world

and I just want to go

and pick those damn daffodils.

The Final Cut

Mike White

I'll never forget the day you smiled and
Said, "home plate ain't for everyone, kid."
I dropped that pitch, proving your point;
I never could handle the curve.

Like the day she called to say
You had slipped your lips
Around the shotgun steel,

Painting the wall red with your thoughts.

What were you thinking, anyway?

22

Flinging fastballs at silver mirrors,
Without a single umpire there
To watch you throw the game.

he Fisherman's Worth

Mobley

Is a poet, are there not roles that one
assumes? Might I suggest a fisherman,
somewhat, being a suitable likeness?
Yes, fishermen, along the water's edge,
baiting their hooks with the truths of lies.

Some may drop a lure, like a segmented worm,
textured with many ridges, peaks and valleys
that dance, pulse down into the lonely depths
of the fish's keen perception. It bites.

This is good.

Others employ a fly, a surface skimmer,
so free, yet almost like a ballerina.
So tempting, fishy finds that he must strike.

This too is good.

Some even resort to using cheese, hoping
the fish'll forget what they are, snatch it up
before it should sink, even though it stinks.

Even this is good.

But it should be known that the fisherman's worth
his ability to catch fish, yet he
must always keep a license and heed the rules,
that change with time, of the wardens of the craft.
Let him not consort to filling his basket,
but should he conform to catch and release.

If the fish are out of the water already,
Is the poet's job to help them back in.

Succulent Incognito

Summer Muzika

Fire seeped through the hole-in-the-wall onto the gray expressionless streets.

A man felt the heat, picked up its musky, heavy scent and brought his vehicle to rest.

He stepped from his car, pulled his hat tight and put one foot after another until he arrived at the table.

His table.

The chair at the table was worn as the wood had given way to his body until the two strangers became friends.

There is no scent like that of burning flesh.

This was the aroma of the quaint cafe, overpowering the cafe latte and soup du jours.

The flesh was ablaze in the furnace at the center of the room.

The skin burned, devouring the blue eyes and brown locks and finely-shaped hands he'd once held.

Ashes fell to nothingness on the checkered tile floor.

He staggered backwards, tipping over the chair that knew him; the spectacle was too much.

He reeled about, searching in wild desperation for some similar countenance in horror.

I found none.

The professors and bums and 9-5 men chatted calmly amongst themselves.

Newspapers rattled, cappuccino frothed and Miles Davis bleated noise from his horn.

As was well.

But the flesh continued to burn, until rage overcame him.

Involuntarily he cast off his demeanor and seized the pyro woman: but the cool marble shocked him, and the man recoiled from the smooth, hard breast.

He clasped his hands tightly. . . burned by the frantic sculpture.

The heat rose in his cheeks as a bum raised an eyebrow and businessmen murmured in disapproval.

I laughed inside, delighted.

It was obvious my lover was shaken.

He hovered between the door and the counter, his mind obliterated and incapable of decision.

After painful seconds he walked to the counter.

He exchanged a bill for a steaming mug and sat gingerly, sun-baked.

He kept his eyes on the liquid before him, diverting them from the inquisitive stares, and god forbid, from the fire.

He was spent.

I drank in divine dissatisfaction and admired the curves, the dips and protrusions of the passionate work that had captured him, held him, enveloped him, embraced him, burned him.

My work.

I lit a pipe and let its smoke curl as a mask about my face, veiling my identity.

From my hiding place I took note of every emotion on his face, recording his expressions in the private box with those of the endless spectators of my art. The box that lets me create.

The flames curled provocatively about me as I realized the succulence of incognito.

Too Late

Jessica Vaughan

Two more weeks
And I would have made it up to you.

Instead of
The room-wrecking brawl in Toronto
My fists through glass on High Street
That waitress at the Holiday Inn
Bottomless gin & tonics with Whitey

I could have you remember
Covered bridges and Eskimo kisses
Snow angels at midnight
Snowy-dipping in the Muskingum
Bouillabaisse and white zinfandel.

I could have made it up to you
In two weeks.

December in New England

Rolf Parker

Ice covered trees
die under the weight
if they aren't released by early spring.
December lies to them.

"Light is coming back to the world, boys," he says.
"Only hang on a little longer and there'll be
velvety green life pushing out of
every Woody pore." But. . .

yesterday, I saw a maple split
open, good wood and bad, splinters and sap.
Until then I thought perhaps he was sincere.

I tried to knock him down and set him on fire but

December just winked at me, turned to the trees and said
"Only a little longer boys, just a bit longer
now, I think we're all going to make it."
then laughs; he knows no one makes

it, winter never dies, it just comes around

again to see who's left, and who has arrived newly for removal, for
murder, and for his sympathy, in the dark.

Suffering in Daylight

Ron Wells

On top of her, she's on top of me
She's unbearably cute and I am such a tease
We created a refuge out of our black sheets
She's the one I've always wanted; she grows on me like the streets
Don't open the blinds baby because it hurts my eyes
I think I lost my hands somewhere – maybe they're on your thighs
Go to the store for some more cigarettes. . . please
I can die for two dollars and pennies
I'm bottled up and strung out over here
There is a drought around this time every year

We're down in Houston with no way out
I see the clouds as white children hanging out
As she takes off my clothes and her tongue surfs my mouth
I think to myself – I'm tired of being alone
I'm tired of being alone
I'm so tired of being alone

Right now I feel nasty like a disease
But I can make you smile with another catch phrase
In school I took Depression 101
So stop asking me why I don't have any fun
You make me violent, girl
You are the calm before the storm
You make me hard when I am soft
And somehow always manage to keep me warm

We're down in Houston with no way out
I see the clouds as white children hanging out
As she takes off her clothes and her tongue surfs my mouth
I think to myself – I'm suffering in daylight

Proposal

Angi Taylor

"What's the answer?"

he asks.

But I'm not listening.

I'm staring at

the curve of his neck

and a little outside

of my eye

I can see

the flashing scenery

of the car window.

And I'm thinking,

not of what he asked,

but of why his neck curves

just so

and how I'd like

to place my hand there.

barely touching the soft fuzz.

Not now, of course,

for he is waiting.

But his neck is still in view

reminding me

of how I used to feel,

and the colors are flying by

the corner of my eye

changing fast from green to blue

to red

to black,

all muted together.

My throat feels dry

and all I can say

is

"No."

grape orange
John Joyner

I want to see you
naked in the ocean
with pearls of water
dripping from your
skin like lapis
lazuli stones,
your only emotion
kissing my malachite
eyes like lips of
fog,
lips of heaven,
lips of laughter
from a child after
the sun has risen
over the opal
waters
where you let
your body float
with the waves
while marble quicksilver
twists through your
orange hair

if the ocean evaporated
would you still be there?
or would you rise slowly
to the sky
and become a cloud
that would rain on
me one day
and wash me away?

untitled
ina Es

i've never really thought of lips as skin
somaybe justso

sin

(of the flesh)

would not apply

i'd been waiting for the

sun to set

a long time before you came

for the earth to roll

the cold to creep

a chill to seep

my bones

mmmmmmmm skeletal scandal

let me tell you

(it would be)

jump bones jack bones shake the dust off these old

yeah and move on

this sun's got a nice slant now

i'm thinking it's welcome after

a year of want

waking ever to the warmth of

your kiss

well

i've been waiting for the

guilt to go

a long time since you came

for the wind to change

the stars to shift

this cloud to lift

iv sky

oh vastlasting vortex

let me tell you

(it once was)

lear sky black sky undone wings and fly

yeah and move on

this sun's got a nice slant now

i'm thinking it's epitaph

to a year of your mouth

moving ever maddening slow

over mine

well

i e never really thought of your lips as skin

s maybe justso

sin

(of the flesh)

would not apply.

Rat Race

Scott Hazle

"I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by
madness, starving hysterical naked"

—Allen Ginsberg, Howl

"And who wants to die today? Not me. Is it you? You,
sir? How about you, madam? This is the age of
equality, we can all die!"

—David Romtvedt, Yip

I can't jump, not yet.

I must shout
From the rooftops,
I must vent
Before I die.
I've done my job,
But there are things a
Harvard education
Can't teach.

I found God
In the work of Spinoza
And Nietzsche,
Logic in the quad
At midnight—
Love and liquor
Over Einstein
anyday.

"Come in from out there, son!"
Thank you, but I'd rather stay.
There's nothing for me in there.

I learned that the Wall Street
Journal, the New York Times,
Are the Bible and Apocrypha
Of my Brave New World.

"It's not worth it, kid!"
Define worth for me, officer.
Perhaps that of Merrill,
And Lynch?
They want me to smile,
And nod, and wink knowingly.
Birdie the thirteenth,
Order martinis,
Marry Sharon Stone
In an apron.

But I drink Pabst,
My girlfriend's in Soho,
Playing Rent.
And no power broker
Is as tolerant
As a Doctor of Philosophy
At the Hasty Pudding.
My ideas are smaller now.
Harvard means no more than SUNY.

"Come in off the ledge, buddy!"
I'm certain, sir,
That you have good intentions
But you can't save me from myself.
I can quote Descartes and Kant
And Hegel,
But I can't work the god-damned
Xerox machine.

Short Story

Aman Behal

The train grinded to a stop at a small station in the Bombay suburb. And as usual, the scuffle resumed between those alighting and boarding. Monotony breeds such contempt, people struggle their way out of one hell and nonchalantly march into another. After all this is what distinguishes the man from the savage, the ability to be bored and then the necessity to be bored differently.

The two cops entered the coach, dumped the oblong, wooden box they were carrying and proceeded to seat themselves. It was a sultry June afternoon on a Wednesday and the sardines had just dispersed to work, so there was some breathing space in the compartment. Francis heaved a sigh of relief. A beam of light shone through a crevice and Francis wondered what time of the day it was. He might have dozed off for a long time.

36

A sharp bend made him shuffle his position but a tiny bit and now the light was no longer glaring him in the eye. The cop yawned, it seemed, for ages and opened the newspaper he had picked up from the platform, and of course, it was gratis just like the train ride and everything else. The law always prevails, we are a country given to that ethic. The headline screamed – 5000 perish in major quake in Iran. The cop looked at his partner, and as if on cue, they yawned again in unison. Pande looked at the box and saw that it had slid off the wall a little, so he got up and gracefully kicked it back in place. He resumed his seat and his yawn and opened the newspaper to the film review page where a slinky starlet stared him in the face. His eyes sparkled. He leered. He was happy.

Francis felt a sharp pain in his ribs as if somebody had kicked him hard there. He wondered why. He had never even harmed a fly throughout his life. Why would people want to hurt somebody who

was forever trying to be gentle? The train picked up a few more passengers and among them was a little kid, say five, with his mother and she held him close. Mothers are always paranoid about their kids, and justifiably so. Own flesh and blood, Francis thought. And he felt something sticky around his own abdomen. Was it blood? He wanted to pull his shirt up and have a look but he was cramped for space. His hand would not move, no matter how hard he tried. The mother loosened her grip and the child took off in the direction of Francis. He was happy to see kids, he liked them. The stretched hand of the mother caught hold of the child and forbade him to go nearer. "Not good for kids." Francis thought why suddenly he had become so repulsive to people. On weekends, he used to take the street kids out to the playground and their mothers always trusted the man. He was known to be a kind-hearted, gentle fellow. His thoughts wandered.

And then, it started coming back to him. Last night, he had come back from work and his wife had said she needed some wheat-flour for dinner. He had promptly changed, tucked his wallet in his front-pocket as he always had done, and had darted out. The street was dimly lit and someone had called him by his name. He could not clearly see who it was but the voice was familiar. It was a friend's voice, and everybody was a friend in that poor locality. And then somebody had grabbed him from behind. They were stopping him of his watch, his gold-ring (it was part of his dowry) and then somebody was going for his wallet. He had panicked and screamed and then he had felt a warm current envelop him. He tried to recall what had happened later but it wouldn't come back.

At that moment, the train entered Dadar station and slowed down and halted. He saw the two cops coming in his direction. And he wondered why he would merit their attention. The cops walked up, lifted the coffin and walked out. "Dump him here, khane ke baad dekhenge (will take care of it after lunch)."

Ode To an Elderly Calculus Teacher

anonymous

I'm walking, in the rain, with that really long umbrella closed in my hand. I like it closed, I like the rain, or at least it makes me feel like a raindrop amongst the storm rather than a storm surrounded all around by fluffy white clouds. The rain's falling through my matted red hair, racing down my skull, sliding down behind my ears, sneaking down my forehead, gliding along my nose only to be blown off by my heavy, heartrending sighs. And I'm thinking, as the rain beats out a driving rhythm, about my posture of all things. "Listen up. This is the way it goes: I hate myself. I hate my body, I hate my hair, I hate my bone-structure, I hate my neurosis, I hate my psychosis, I hate my sub-conscious, I hate my conscious. I hate my inner child, my outer ego, my heart-on-the-sleeve-don't-hurt-me-please-why-were-we-ever-here-and-why-are-you-all-the-way-over-there personality and it is by the grace of God alone that I manage to stand, much less stand up straight!"

I get to the multi-storied building after my rain pondering and walk into my third semester calculus class. So the prof walks in, walking quickly and displaying that grandmotherly smile that announces to everyone in the room, "I have absolutely no idea what's going on here, I live in my HP-48G and you are about to spend the next hour in my living room." She opens her mouth with an "OK. . . ." and my mind is gone, traveling from the brink of hell to the depths of heaven and skipping over the earth as quickly as possible. She must have gotten around to memorizing my name because she breaks into my mind's flight with the deadly question "Chris, did you have any questions from last night's assignment?" And immediately my thinking finishes up its tirade on posture and starts with a simple question, "Did I do the homework assignment? Did you? And while we're on the subject, did you figure out the secret to life last night, or were you busy recording the meaning to life? Did you do your thinking about love, or God, or finding God?"

being a god, or a Child of God, or the superman theory, the
net-death of the universe, or did you even manage to figure out
what you were feeling? Did you get closer to enlightenment, to
inner peace, to a loved one, or did you only draw your knees to
your chin and bow your head and rock yourself crying to sleep
again? Have you backstepped your way through your childhood
and found that one incident that made you the way you are, for-
ever? Did you tell someone you love them? Did you touch the
future, disarm the past, or decide to endure the present? Did you
swear an unbreakable oath and mean it? Did you make a promise,
keep a promise, break a promise, make someone's day, make
someone laugh, make someone cry, make someone die, or bring
yourself back from the dead? Did you waste your time or did you
actually accomplish something? No, I'm sorry, I didn't get to
your calculus last night, but I tell you what, if I ever actually solve
an equation worth solving, then I'll tell you the answer."

***Chronicle* High School Magazine Competition**

In this age of ever increasing technological influence, it can be difficult to remember the importance of the arts and find an outlet for creativity. The *Chronicle* High School Magazine Competition was begun to combat this problem by encouraging creative expression throughout South Carolina.

High schools all over the state submitted their magazines, which were then judged by *Chronicle's* staff in three areas: layout and design, content quality and selection process. While we applaud all the participants for their excellent publications, three stood out particularly strong in all three areas:

First Place: Laureate

Brookland-Cayce High School, Cayce, SC

Second Place: Illusions

Fort Hill High School, Fort Hill, SC

Third Place: Sapphony

Wade Hampton High School, Greenville, SC

We congratulate all the schools on a job well done and encourage them, and everyone, to continue their support of the arts and creative expression.

Fall 1998 Chronicle

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chronicle



chronicle

spring 1999

Clemson University

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Cover Art

"What Happens at Home"
Margaret Denk - 1998
Photograph & Silk Screen
14 x 18.5"

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Our only criteria for choosing art or literature
is the quality of its expression.



"Skinned"

Amy Holms

1999

Sepia Toned Silver

Gelatin Print

16" x 20"

First Spring Storm

Matt Fallon

From afar,
 I observe her
 Deliberately graceful movements.
She draws close,
 And I am witness
 To her perfume,
 So powerfully subtle,
 So rare and inviting.
She clasps my bare neck
 And her cool fingers draw me in
 To hear her sensual comments,
 While her warm breath
 Delicately caresses my ear.
Her sliding black gown,
 Of a material alien to my knowledge,
 Softly glides across her body
 Revealing the curves
 Unique to perfection.
I look directly into her eyes;
I stare through her flashing iris
 And truth is no longer mysterious,
 Secrets are told.
Her moist lips,
 They brush mine at first,
 And eventually embrace them tightly.
 Slowly do they recede.
Before she departs,
 I look at her longingly
 And she knows that I cannot be content.
One more kiss,
 please,
Before lightning strikes elsewhere.



“Untitled”

Jennifer Stemen

1998

Silver Gelatin Print

the word “DIET” is carved on my desk: excerpts from an eating disordered undergrad’s diary

hhr

Today i have eaten a half cup of lowfat cottage cheese, three raisins, six peanuts and a Carnation instant breakfast—sugar free, with skim milk.

It’s 10:30pm. My stomach is growling. A week ago, i would’ve gone into the kitchen and gotten myself a snack. Tonight i lay on my bed and convince myself to stay away from the kitchen. In a couple of hours i will fall asleep and forget this gnawing hunger, i tell myself and continue to read. Trouble is, i can’t really read. The words aren’t registering and i keep thinking about the chocolate covered cheesecake i saw at the deli today. David commented on how good it looked. i stared at it in its protective glass case like the enemy it was. Tomorrow, at work, i would have to sell this ugly indulgence to unassuming boys and bulimic sorority girls. Tomorrow, i would pace back and forth in front of this same case and talk myself out of devouring this hunk of goo. Instead i just think about how i changed 36 times before school and how tight my jeans felt this morning and it’s not hard to resist. It’s food that caused this.

Sometimes i think about how much i love to go out to dinner and how good vanilla ice cream feels on my tongue. i’m not sure how much i’m willing to sacrifice. No more after dinner Bailey’s. No more Reeses Pieces sundaes at Friendly’s. It makes me tired to decide which i like more—eating or being thin.

i love being thin. All summer long everyone told me how thin i was. i smiled, proud of my hidden accomplishment. 112 pounds at five foot five! i was a wonder! The compliments never ceased! i worked double shifts on a large hazelnut coffee and half a muffin. i refused birthday cake and chicken Florentine. i loved the way the numbers dropped on the scale. i went to the gym and ran until my head began to spin. i went rollerblading in 90 degree heat. i did squats until my knees ached.

And it was all worth it. i conquered my own fat self.

Then i lost control. There were times when i had to eat and i ate with reckless abandon. Social outings i couldn’t escape. Ben&Jerry’s alone at three am. Oreo cookies shoved into my mouth with such fervor that i almost choked.

And it never tasted good.

Food stuffed in napkins. Laxatives hidden in all of my pockets.

Twenty minutes spent sick in the Main Street Bar and Grill restroom after curly fries and a chicken sandwich that DID taste good. Mary and my father noted my weight loss just before i excused myself to reject my meal. Mary hadn’t eaten one fry. She eyed me suspiciously

as i happily dunked them in pools of ketchup. i ordered a second mudslide. She slumped in her chair. Part of the control was gone but i didn't care. This way, i could eat all of the yummy foods i wanted and still be thin. Euphoria!

Then, after six weeks of swallowing the little orange saviors, they stopped working. i took three at a time, nothing happened. Four at a time, no luck. The fat crept back and i hated myself again. i became somewhat sensible for a while. Eating until i was full. Occasional treats. i did have a couple of lapses—one in which i stole laxatives off a grocery store shelf and swallowed them right there in the aisle without water. i spent the next 16 hours in such pain that i wanted to die. The second was at a restaurant in Birmingham, when i feared my size four jeans were a bit too tight. Another food expulsion in a restaurant ladies room. Eight year old Elizabeth was just outside the door. I prayed that she would never be like me. "You're beautiful," she said. And i almost cried. Don't tell me that.

i joined the gym and weighed myself—i had gained sixteen pounds! From that minute on, i retained control.

It has been four days. In those four days i have consumed the calories one should consume in one day. The cycle is starting. My head is spinning. When will i be free of this?

Karen just came home and told me she was starving. i heard her heat up a bowl of something in the microwave. i can hear her fork clanking against the bowl as she feeds herself in the next room. My stomach's noises are audible. It's almost midnight. I'll eat breakfast in the morning. Maybe two tablespoons of sugar free yogurt with a pinch of granola. Maybe four raisins tomorrow. i feel lightheaded and weak. i think i'll go back to my reading. No sleep tonight.

Play Chess?

John Joyner

no I do
not know how
to play chess,
know nothing of
bishops, queens or pawns,
know nothing of
something because
everything's gone,
I just want to
watch the people
walk to the
bars
and clear my conscience
with simple regards,
like regards
to the girl
who drinks her coffee
with a spoon
and
regards to the
little boy who
ran away to the moon,
and perhaps my sincerity
is nothing much more
than a letter
of apology
signed:

Sincerely Yours,
poet

At Head Quarters

Chrissy Davenport

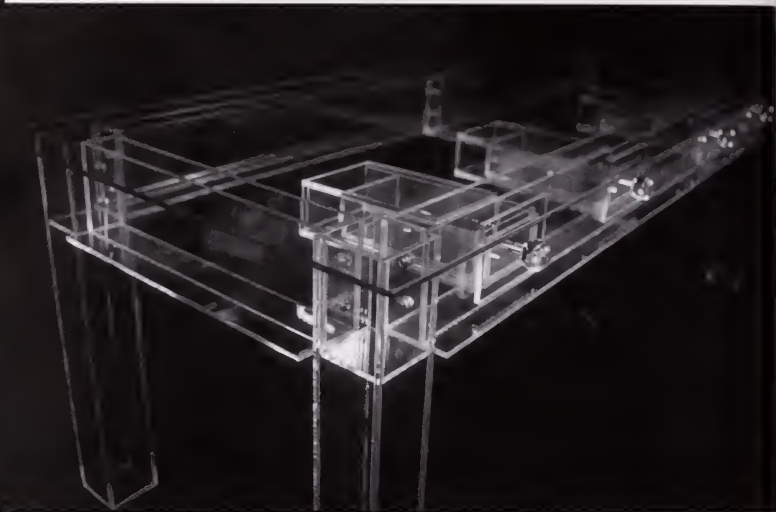
Lonely is the man who
stands and says "No,
I will not." When there
are a thousand others
who are willing to offer
their life to the cause.
So they tell him "We have
heard that before."
And he walks out feeling
more embarrassed than proud.
These nights he sits watching
a Late Show while others
drive tediously toward
something that makes them
blind.

*"Life will always
remain a gamble, with
prizes sometimes for
the imprudent, and
blanks so often to the
wise."*

- Jerome K. Jerome

"Plexiglass Coffee Table"

Fred Taylor
1997



"see everything"

-Eric Grijalva

"Thinking of You"

Eric Grijalva
1999
Silver Gelatin Print
8" x 10"



For Karan

Kelly Dunphy

Strung in the pines' lowest branches
Hand-height to shoulder dripped color
Rags or cloths that lay once
In a mother's smooth hands

Lying in a triangle of light that broke
Through the upper branches lay two beaten bags
Propped against each other like old friends
Faded, worn, torn, and soggy from last night's drizzle

More rags peeked out the bags, printed rags
With strings and backs that let in drafts
And never closed correctly for all that wore them

"Hospice" printed neatly on a tag carried the smell of bandaids
Of moans, straps, and intense faces trying to solve a puzzle
Who had no intention of being solved

The Evian bottle nestled down between would have
Brought to mind moving mountain water rippled

But here the taste of fear licked its molded plastic form
Survival. A desperate escape. Slinking
into an Exxon station, slipping the bottle amid the folds
of a gown taken off behind the rear dumpster

And a trail of brownish bottles with child safety caps
Leading to the base of the first decorated pine
With a name, and part of the story, faded into the labels
It's all I know of the mystery, and the only contact I have
With Karan

"The story: While my roommate was taking photos for an assignment, I wandered into a nearby woods and stumbled on the scene described in this poem. My imagination ran wild and when I got home I jotted down my thoughts. Epilogue: I eventually used a number off one of the medicine bottles to track down Karan. She had been released for a week last October, had been found wandering around the woods, and was re-admitted to the Anderson Psychiatric Hospital. She still lives there today and is in 'good physical health'."

-Kelly Dunphy

"Reunion"

Tom Dimond

1999

Acrylic on canvas

82" x 82" x 2 1/2"



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Bread

Beets

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Cream

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Kitty Litter

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Dirty Napkins

Broken Clocks

Oily Pans

Broken Plates

Green Gunk

Raisins, Dates

Pantyhose

With a run

Murder weapon

It's a gun

Pissed off

Pissed on

Old Photos

Telephone

So you think

You're Miserable

With your job at hand

Take some time and thank

The bitter garbage man

*"A squash blossom
dies, I feel withered as
if a stained zucchini."*

- Twain Pigott

In Love with Shakespeare

James R. Andreas, Sr.

Film lovers have been lining up at the Astro Theater in Clemson for weeks to see "Shakespeare in Love", a film that swept a number of awards at the Golden Globe awards, including best actress for Gwyneth Paltrow and best screenplay for Tom Stoppard, and is sure to be so honored at the Oscars. The eighth annual Clemson Shakespeare Festival which drew twenty thousand people to various events here and around the state opened with the film. How does one explain the popularity of "Shakespeare in Love", the unlikely appearance of Harold Bloom's scholarly book, "Shakespeare and the Invention of the Human", on the bestseller list, and the many new Shakespeare films in the works to add to the stellar list of the last few years including Al Pacino's "Looking for Richard", Baz Luhrmann's "Romeo and Juliet" with Leonardo DiCaprio, and Trevor Nunn's "Twelfth Night" with Helena Bonham Carter? Helen Hunt also appeared as Viola in a fine "Twelfth Night" at the Lincoln Center last year, and Calista Flockhart from "Ally McBeal" will star in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" this May. Kenneth Branagh is about to start a 1930s musical version of "Love's Labor's Lost" and we will see Ethan Hawke in "Hamlet" set in New York. Modern-day adaptations of "Othello" and "Taming of the Shrew" are also in the works. Is it millennial fever that has made Americans so Shakespeare-friendly in the last decade? And when will all this "Bardolatry" – as Bernard Shaw enviously called the worship of Shakespeare – go away? Judging from American, not to mention British entertainment choices, not soon.

A better question to ask might be, where does all this "Bardolatry" come from? Shakespeare was a pop phenomenon in his own age – it was estimated that more than a million folks came to see his plays in his own Globe Theatre during his career – and has remained so virtually for the last four hundred years. The most popular subject for film as the new medium at the turn of the twentieth century was Shakespeare. His plays, particularly the tragedies, were automatic box office draws and all the big Hollywood stars like Emil Jannings, Asta Nielsen, and Lionel Barrymore wanted to do Shakespeare. Nothing's changed really, although there are obviously cycles of popular interest in Shakespeare, and we're at a real peak right now. In the thirties, for instance, there was a spate of Shakespeare films including Max Reinhardt's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (1935) starring Dick Powell, Olivia De Havilland, Mickey Rooney, and Joe E. Brown, among others – a real star studded cast like Kenneth Branagh, Emma Thompson, Denzel Washington, Michael Keaton, and Keanu Reeves who appeared in Branagh's "Much Ado About Nothing", released a

few years ago. In 1936 George Cukor produced a splendid "Romeo and Juliet" with the two great screen lovers of the time, Leslie Howard of "Gone With the Wind" fame and Norma Shearer.

So, what do we make of the fever for displacing the fear of Shakespeare that is sweeping the movie theaters, playhouses, and bookstores of the land? It may be nothing new, but for sure you don't want to miss the Bardwagon. So support your local Shakespeare Festival, in our case the Clemson Shakespeare Festival which ran from February 12-27, 1999 in the Brooks Center on the Clemson University campus. Information about Clemson Shakespeare Festival IX can be obtained by calling the box office at 864-656-7877. Email the festival at cholt@clemson.edu or check out the fabulous festival website at www.clemson.edu/shakespeare.



"Art is a metaphor
for life that allows us
access to experience;
new and old."

-J. P. Tousignant

"Sopor"

*J. P. Tousignant
Lithograph
15" x 18"*

The Pieta

Tonia Lyne Swinney

"So powerful is the influence of a truly great character on all that surrounds it."

*- Alexandre Dumas,
from The
Three Musketeers*

I slept until I saw the statue bleed.
His blood, an ocean wave, washed the sand from my eyes.
His cries of agony said to me,
"awake, my child, AWAKE!!!"
My heart and soul obeyed.
I sleep no more.

"I believe photography to be a dichotomy between what 'we' believe the realistic world is and what 'we' allow to be fantasy. I enjoy manipulating images that would be too difficult to represent without the camera and re-introducing them as images to then question their role, environment, and existing qualities."

- Jessica Sosebee

"Untitled"

*Jessica Sosebee
1998
Silver Gelatin Print
8" x 10"*



Detroit

Amanda Litchfield

Two bullet holes in a green sign on the road.
A curve, a factory, and I am in the city.
I watch billowing smoke, and a snowplow leads my way.
I have been told that it will never be the way it was
But I know that reconstruction occurs.
Somehow when I see her I am changed back
Or forward, or into something that once was or is.
Every year they burn all of it, and yet she still stands.
How am I supposed to remember her face when it
Changes all of the time?
It is like seeing the most beautiful bird
Covered in crude oil and flapping.
That happens too though, and I know
That it makes her even more beautiful, vulnerable.
In a blanket laying quietly she becomes
The epitome of wonder.
Days later she changes back though, and the black taints her face.
She is mascara-streaked, crying and pitiful.
And the snowplow keeps going through her
Leading me, changing everything.

HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW WHAT HER EYES LOOK LIKE?

Rolf Parker

Her name is Betty or Simelia or some such
and her breasts are no smaller than grapefruit
or perhaps a lot smaller, smaller than the palm of her hand
and set perfectly high, as though at attention, at all times,
or perhaps they are just the breasts that nourish my baby,
our child, finally a child.

And Betty's lips form this perfect little circle, small mouth
puffy lips, just right for....
Perhaps they are just the lips that say,
"There you are, I was looking for you."
and in so doing draw me to her bed for the
next forty years.

And she wears the most revealing clothes,
each footstep causing some portion of her
body to bounce or swish into startling view.
She delights in herself and the effect she has.
She is sexual java in my cup of life.
Or maybe she was practically a nun until recently,
and her clothes smell of cleaned cotton and nothing,
and nothing of her is seen save her hands, her upper neck
and her face.
It is her safety suit for dealing with a probing world,
her, "no thank you please" uniform,
that she pulls on to protect her from daylight.
Each night she asks me to pull it off of her,
and she throws it on the floor like a boa constrictor that
we repeatedly vanquish,
and we laugh at the snake that almost got her again.
With me she delights in revealing all.

She will know
that there are many ways to be lovable,
but Betty or (Simelia or whatever the hell her name
turns out to be after I meet her)
will definitely know what the hell
love is and what it is not.
That much is clear.

How lucky to be old enough
to find it easy
to love many
but to only need
one.

The English Major

Jessica Vaughan

“Cotton,” you say
like your mouth is stuffed full of it.
“Cot Ton”—
there are two t’s in there, you know.

On my island for a day,
and you think you’re fluent in the language;
then why do you want to wash your face
with my shirt?

Look,
I ride for the Queen,
I’ve seen *Bonanza*;
I’m a cultured man.
Just reading our books back in Illinois—
Ohio?
Wherever,
back in Ohio—
doesn’t make you an officer in our regiment, lady.

*“So long as you write
what you wish to
write, that is all that
matters.”*

*- Virginia Woolf,
from A Room of
One’s Own*

The Great Loss

Todd Hunnicutt

Complex feeling upon a cause.
Hallway lights dim warning of
an approaching storm.
Looking down the old dirt road,
traces of Grandpa's wagon weathering
upon a sawdust pile of once was barn
I used to know.

Looking up,
no rope and pulley rising.
Remembering little John's screams
as we hoisted him to the loft though
leaving him tied midway later found us
on the receiving end of a hickory.
Ole Fireball barking chasing his tail until
someone cried "wolf".
Off to the pasture checking for escaping cow.
Running back only to be sent on the chase again.
Now I sit on the porch,
no dinner bell ringing,
old men voices no longer echoing,
Grandma's churn still in place after all the years.
Winds through the pines as the rain begins to fall.
Wetness upon my cheeks.
One last stand before the progress of man
Takes this beauty away.
(and daddy won't you take me back to Mulenburg county..... thanks JP.)

*"Life is but a fraction
of time we have to
write."*

*" 'A Gift for You' is
about losing my
childhood memories
and on a whim,
remembering them."*

- Todd Hunnicutt

*(one small thing I
would like to share, I
am Learning Disabled
and was told by many
that I would not make
it. Well I did!!!!!!)*



"In my work, I strive to give a sense of preciousness and fragility to my forms. I choose the potters wheel as the vehicle to produce both functional and sculptural vessels."

- Gwendolyn R. Magee

"Connected"

Gwendolyn Magee
Porcelain
6" x 10"

"I deny everything because I lie about everything. And everything I deny is a lie."

- Groucho Marx

North

bryan r.s.

Polaris definable,
dead star of a cosmic hollywood
aged, withered actor of light.
come into the rebirth,
a photon renaissance,
while we weep
tears of joy.

the birth of our new star,
our grandiose corporeal prop,
for a stage long past.

"Untitled"

Alice Finklestein



handshake

Peter Bloomsday

When Ric came to talk there wasn't a dry eye that watched
If you'll stretch the analogy we've all found liquid cocaine desirous
All of us have fallen for sin
Everyone has struggles with temptation
All of us were wounded and some of us are dead
Ric acquired the immune deficiency syndrome
Here's my hand
When he reaches thirty-two he'll be gone
Laughed when i said safe sex is an oxymoron
Sure he's gay, but swears he didn't get it that way
If sin is sin you're just another gay book judged by the cover
 whose next page is stamped at the end
So here's my handshake Should I be scared?
When Paul grabbed the serpent Paul's life was spared
So shall mine be
If a needle prick brought this disease take my sincerest sympathies
Here's my handshake
Will it spread through my skin when my hand touches him?
Here's my handshake
Watch our hands
 shake

Between Harvest Times

Chrissy Davenport

"That old tree is going to hit the house if we don't," said Chase. "But Pa's great great grandpa planted it," I said. "I will send for them today," he said, "His great great grandpa built this house, too."

Inside she was lying in bed. Her face was the same white color as her hair had been all year. Her hands were raised up in the air. We had all been watching out the window at the city workers who had come to cut that old tree. She was screaming at the bed nurse with her hands raised in the air. The tree outside looked like a shadow of them, bare and twisted from old age, and they were both going down together.

A neighbor woman had already sent a pie. It was Chase who went to the door. He took the pie from her. "She ain't dead yet, though. They's coming for her tomorrow. You come a day too early."

They stopped all the cutting and sawing around dusk when the tree was just a tall stalk with little nubs left where the limbs used to reach out. They gave Doc a ride back to town. "We will be back tomorrow," they both said. It was only us left at her bed. The tree was shining out the window from the glow in the bedroom. Now *she* was a shadow, it standing up skinny outside and her lying down flat and long.

It was not like this with Pa. He had fallen in the field. We tied an old sac to the plow handles and the old horse drug him back to the house. Us three boys had put him in the bed until they come to pick him up. We didn't go with him. Ma went, but she had told us he would have been glad to have finished that one last row behind the plow and that we were to plant the corn in it. Every day that year she would sit on the front porch and watch that row of corn running cock-ways from the others, starting at mid field and heading out in a straight line to the porch. At harvest time we cut it like the rest. This time was not like Pa. Ma had not gotten to pull her last row, but she was already in bed, and they were coming for her tomorrow.

In the morning Chase woke me up saying, "That tree is a damn sight looking like that. Today they are coming to take it away in pieces. They say one that big can't be took in just one time." "Are they bringing Doc this morning?" I said. "No. He said she weren't going to last the night and that he would just send a wagon to get her." "I'm not going in there yet," I said, "I have work to do in the yard."

The wagon came on time. There were three men they brought to take her: the preacher, the undertaker, and the undertaker's son. The undertaker eyed me when he drove into the yard. The preacher started

for the door: they always go in first. "Go in with him and carry her out when he's done," the undertaker told his son. "You her boy?" he asked me. "Yes," I said, "she's in that room there. We won't be going. We've got work." I pointed to my sister standing in the doorway. "You can take her if you want to."

The undertaker's son came out in front of preacher. "She ain't going today," he said. "What's that?" said his father. "I went on in there to wrap her up and bring her out, but she looked right at me and said 'I ain't dead yet. You come a day too early. You bring them all back in the morning. That'll be the time.'" Chase smiled.

Larry came back that day. Pa had died thirteen months ago and five weeks after that Larry went off to the army and hasn't been back. He got a letter. We sent him one last month when Ma came up sick, told him to get on home before we buried her. He should've already been back a week, but only came in a few hours ago. He said he met the undertaker and his son a couple miles up the road and they had told him Ma weren't dead yet.

After Pa died and Larry went off, the rest of us was just like we didn't have much to say to each other. Me and Chase was always out to the fields plowing and planting. Sister's doing things for Ma, cooking and tending to the cow. Ma said we weren't even hardly a family no more and that it ached her in the heart to think about it.

That night Ma asked the bed nurse to cook a good dinner for Larry. She said a bed nurse usually don't do a thing like that, but that these were times when you did what you was asked. "Go round back and get that old jar of corn I been saving all year," Ma told her. "It's the last of it."

We come to the dinner table early that night like sister asked us. Some of the plowing didn't get done because of it, but Chase said sometimes you got to pick what needs tending to the most, and that's Ma tonight. "Where's the food?" I said. "It'll be here in time," sister said.

I looked over to the corner and saw the bed nurse scooting out backwards through the doorway. She was holding Ma's hands while Larry helped carry her to the table. "Move that chair," Larry said, "she's eating at the table with us tonight." Chase jumped up and pulled out Ma's chair. "She ain't supposed to be out of bed this way," he said, "you can't just come after all this time and be taking her up like that, Larry." "She's gone die no matter if she's in there in the bed or if she's right here at this dinner table," Larry said. "This is my night," Ma said, "let me have it one more time." Chase smiled.

*"The great use of life
is to spend it for
something that
outlasts it."*

- William James

The dinner was all set around by the time Ma was upright in her chair. Sister and the bed nurse had come out with the guest dinnerware. "We're going to use this tonight," said sister, "Tonight is Ma's last night." She was beaming in her seat. We all sat around the table trying to eat as slow as possible since it was her last supper with us. "This is your father's corn," Ma said, "and this is my family, the whole of it. All round this table - my family."

The next morning they came back to take her like she said. The people from the city were there, too. I heard one of them tell Chase that they should finish the job in a couple trips. "Yeah," he said, "one's big as that one there, you can't take 'em all in one time."

"Everything old is
new again."
- Peter Allen

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Charcoal



"Memorial"

MJ Hooks

1999

Acrylic on canvas

5' x 4 1/2'

killing poetry

Parker Smith

On the Astro
transformers press square form onto
a tangle of black wire running everywhere.

Across the street it was
-19 on the Dow today.

The bright yellow Shell sign
stuck in the sky below the moon
lights the dim road and
then the blue lights of
the police car parked at Papa's killing poetry.

*"since feeling is first
who pays any atten-
tion to the syntax of
things will never
wholly kiss you."*

- e.e. cummings

What the Fiction Editor Said

Rolf Parker

Or

The Somewhat Snide Anti - Poetry Sonnet

with apologies to Shakespeare, Allan Ginsburg,
and with malice towards none.

"Poetry is for those who
have no gift for plot
who never could be taught
to do anything but howl and coo
and mash together images with glue
boiled from the bones of lectures they caught
with the tin trap minds they bought
from whatever snooty college they went to.

Poets hate clear expression;
it leaves them no place to hide from a reader's clear question.
Far better to remain very vaguely vague,
to wrap oneself wolf-like in a cloak of wooly words
coughing out morbid lines for the herd
spreading one's confusion like a lockjaw plague"

"Here are two great
websites for the
poetry minded:
[www.poets.org/LIT/
findfst.htm](http://www.poets.org/LIT/findfst.htm) has a large
number of poems by a
large number of poets,
organized A to Z, all
available online,
and [www.compassion
project.org](http://www.compassionproject.org) has a
bunch of great quotes
on the topic of com-
passion by famous
writers, thinkers, and
that ilk.

Caitlin Bournival
gave birth February
27, 1999 to a beauti-
ful baby girl, Lily.

To all, have a great
life.
Goodbye Clemson."

-rolf parker

The Artist

Amanda Litchfield

The artist shows me his magic
And I smile at the fact that it is on his thigh.
She has bright red hair and orange skin.
Her nipples hang out over the top of her corset.
I giggle at the fact she carries a duster
And bends over in her French maid's outfit.
I ask about the bubbles in the background
And he says it's a tattoo thing.
I have never seen anything like her
And I blush when I have to look at her face.
She has a sister up on his left shoulder
Who it seems is the bad one in the group.
Dressed in all black, face made up.
I swear when he hugs me, I can see her wink.
Sometimes it makes me jealous to know
That these two are always with him, against his skin.
But it is art in the rarest form.
There is more I am told, even stranger pictures,
But I tell him I have had enough art for right now.

*"...and all my instincts,
they return
and the great facade, so
soon will burn
without a noise, without
my pride
I reach out from the
inside..."*

- Peter Gabriel

Fifty-five

Woody Muire

Truck headlights on the midnight highway are comets from my bedroom window. Half-asleep, I compose tomorrow's e-mail; first, to you a haiku about winter rain. Second, to my best friend I confess my new secrets which are our secrets which are trivial. I tell her how I have a new feeling in my heart; not an emotion, a new physical feeling. I don't tell her (or you) about how I can sometimes see the future, or how I often flash omnipotent.

Realization: momentary total connection. I am a truck headlight. I rinse in winter rain. First love at 23; I have a bad heart. Loving you makes my heart beat harder. In thirty-two years I will be ash. In thirty-two years I will end like comets.

*"If any wish to carry
on this tradition of
using Art for battling
evil, find Cheops of
Helios in Brightwood
City and tell him of
my passing -- perhaps
he will grant you the
use of my spare
spellbook, or even
better, tell you about
the old days. Ask him
about Kalamay."*

*-Twilligur,
Master of Storms*

the persuading

Brian Williams

the persuading breeze grows to a march
while my wings give lift and throw me to the sky
and my heart sees nothing but the clouds
as the touching of the blue helps me to fly.

yet the currents seem to have no end
for they twist and turn without a certain aim
i surrender all my conscious will
as the heavens guide my way and take the strain

until now, I have not looked upon
what was once the ground i knew beneath my feet.
how the faces gaze up at my form!
the amusement that it stirs moves me to weep

here I bask, untouched by all who see.
just a vision for those who are passing by
and the light that gleams is not the sun
but the eyes of she who taught me how to fly

as to flight, my course has come to close.
i cannot keep up this joy that i have found.
i'd forgotten what it is to live
...and my angel pulls me back down to the ground.

*"On a scale of one to
ten...four is about
seven."*

- anonymous

"Folded Wings/
Broken Wings"

Sydney A. Cross
1996

Lithograph and Stencil
22" x 20"



In the same old haunts

Kristin Woods

"Do I know you?"

"Haven't we met?"

As I walk in the door the smell of cigarettes
and the energy of caffeine slap me in the face as if to say,

"Welcome; join us."

The spirits in the room socialize.

They share mindless glances over coffee mugs and beer bottles.

"Yes! Now I remember. We talked yesterday,
same time, same table."

As I push open the glass door and step out into the street,
I forget his name.

The nicotine lingers in my hair and in my mouth.

I'll see him again.

Tomorrow night perhaps.

ludic

Tina Price

the jack of hearts
never blinked an eye
when we met.
so i never suspected
that the internet puppies
were really rabid beasts.

i just kept on hoping.

and my friends never warned me
about those preppy
private school bastards.
so i never suspected
that the sour apple on your tongue
was really poison.

i just kept on craving.

and freud never said
that siamese dreams
were really fucked up nightmares.
so i never suspected
that the popping beer cans
were really gunshots to my head.

i just kept on dying.



"My art centers on violence that takes place in our society. There are situations that occur that we may not be able to stop, however, we have a responsibility to help in the healing process. How much or how little depends on the individual, but shutting others out only perpetuates the cycle."

- Margaret Denk

"Searching for the Provider"

Margaret Denk

1998

*Lithograph & Silk
Screen*

Swingin'

J. Shannon Pierce

Green-
Green-
Green is the grass
that
grows.

Tall-
Tall-
Tall is the green tree
above
the
grass.

Free-
Free-
Free is the soul
of the man
in
the
tall
green
tree.

Short-	
Short-	
Short, is the	new rope
of the	man
in the	tall tree
above	the
green	grass
Tight-	Tight-
Tight, is	the knot
in the rope	of the man
with the	free soul.

At the Cemetery

Jessica Vaughan

Mom says
she doesn't think of your grave
as where you are,
doesn't need to visit
or decorate it
to feel close to you.

But I need to do both
because that marker
is all that's left of you
that can't be handed down.

I am comforted by the metaphor
of that pine blanket
warming the steel casket
and your cold bones
through the layers
of frozen Snow Belt soil
during the season
when we were always warmest.

A Players blues in the key of C

Holden Warren

*"What I care about is
the Way, which goes
beyond skill."*

- Chuang-Tzu

*to Todd, thanks for the
Holes...and Bay*

Guilt hangs
over the balance
sleep to escape
tearing at my
wounds
pain follows me
like the sun
seeking solace in
the night
far from the
unbearable light of being
the moon
is no friend
budda on my
shoulders
crashing Karma
four alarm fire
in my soul
transcendental trainwreck
crash and burn
Freud and Nietchze
mid-air collision
sifting through
the rubble
picking up pieces
Catholic school
brainwashed reactions
Taoist stories
macho scenes from
tom cruise movies
late night parental screaming
trying to put together
a puzzle
that has never
been assembled



"I try to create situations of chance through alternative and experimental methods, so that I don't end up with expected results. This way the subject is constantly being reinvented, never being the same as I had originally viewed it."

- J. P. Tousignant

"Nathan L."

J. P. Tousignant
Silver Gelatin Print
16" x 20"

Man

John Joyner

I get up in the morning and my topic feels like hell. I clean it, shave it, brush it back, and push it forward unwillingly into the light of another hard day filled with misconceptions about what it is and expectations about what it should be. I pull my body into a routine that bores it, makes its butt ache, makes its head pound. I smoke a cigarette to keep my body from crying, but my child tells me that they are unhealthy and flushes the whole pack down the toilet. More money down the drain.

The basic male body comes with the following accessories: kung-fu grip, saddle bag, secret decoder ring, basic white, credit card, debit card, Master Card, "mow the front yard," wide-brimmed hat, high school ring, digital watch, neck tie, "why can't the girl do it?," money problems, #2 pencil, sneakers, lunch pail, banjo, machine gun, and stirrups. Batteries not included. Some assembly required.

Pleasure in the male body is always the issue. But they say we're not talking about love. Maybe we are, and they just aren't hearing it.

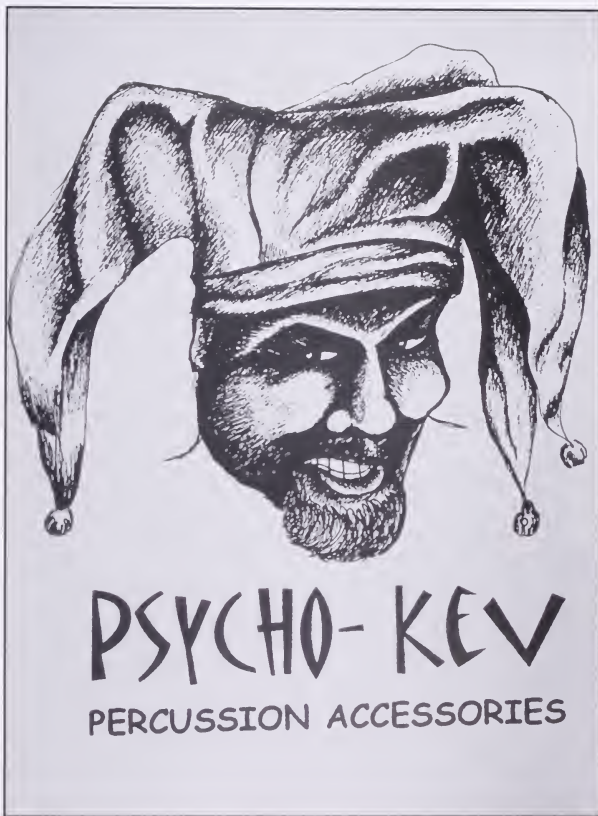
The male body contains a brain. The brain contains the whole universe, at least in that man's opinion. The brain dreams every night, and that is why the male body feels like hell in the morning. The male brain contemplates its problems, formulates solutions, formulates more solutions, loses control, regains control, jumps to conclusions, obsesses over illusions like nuclear fusion, wishes on stars, wonders why we are who we are. . . the male brain is complex. It isn't just designed to hit a target, it is also designed to love. John Lennon said "all you need is love" and John Lennon was assassinated so he must know something.

No man truly knows who he is until he leaves this world.

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the upstate, and hot
dogs, too!*

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"Expert texpert
choking smokers
don't you think the
joker laughs at you?
... I am the walrus
GOO GOO GOO
JOOB."

- from The Beatles
Magic Mystery Tour

"Psycho-Kev"

Kevin McCall
1999
Pen and Ink

Why I Hate You

Woody Muire

I guess part of it is because I am jealous. It took me twenty-one years to learn a lesson that most of you figured out within your first week of high school. It is something we don't talk about, but all have realized. We don't talk about it because it is obvious; it would be like writing a novel about breathing.

What I'm talking about is the rules. There are two sets of rules in our society. The first is the set we teach our children: Sit up straight. Don't lie, cheat or steal. Be nice. Be patient. Respect each other. We are all the same on the inside. Peace and love.

The second set makes up the real rules. These are the ones we are never overtly taught, but we figure out through life's subtle clues: Lie if it helps and you can get away with it. Cheat on your taxes; cheat on your wife. Steal cable. Stab your co-worker in the back. Don't get caught.

Judge people by their appearance. Group together with those that are like you; shun those who are different.

Strength is all-important. The strong rule the weak. Become stronger than others in your group, and you rule them.

You are more important than the group. Your own needs (sexual, monetary, emotional) are paramount. Take what you need.

Kill the different. They are wrong and you are right. If you can't kill their bodies, kill their minds. Kill them with money. Kill them with sex. Kill them with petty rewards.

We have laws, but we have classified them into two categories. There are serious laws which everybody agrees should not be broken (i.e. murder), and then there are laws which we have to pat ourselves on the back so we can call ourselves civilized (i.e. speed limits, substance abuse laws, morality laws, separation of church and state).

We form tribes. We name them fancy words like associations and fraternities and societies and countries, but they are merely tribes. We are aborigines with TV.

I hate you because we are ruled by fear. We do so many foolish things because we are afraid of looking weak in front of our friends, our family, our group. We bully each other because of fears of inferiority. We hurt our lovers for fear of rejection.

Even now, I'm still jealous. It took me so damn long to figure out those childhood rules were a test for the naïve, an illusion to make ourselves feel better. I don't like the real rules very much. They are twisted; following them twists me.

Do I have a point here? I haven't told you anything you didn't already know. But why do we do this? Why do we act like jackasses? We know it's wrong. People innately know right from wrong. It's like when you wake up in the middle of the night and it's utterly black, but

you still know where your hand is. You can touch your fingers to your nose easily in the darkness, because you just know.

We act like jackasses because it's easy. It's convenient. And everybody does it. We've been doing it forever. People look today at our current scandals and embarrassments and think, "What are we coming to? We're getting worse every day!" But the truth is that the same shit went down two hundred years ago, fifteen hundred years ago, three thousand years ago.

I'm not here to preach. I have no apocalyptic warnings of downward spirals into chaos. I'm certainly no paragon; I'm not about to lead you by example into some golden age.

I merely have a message, one I expect you to forget. I have a new rule, one I'd like you to add to the list: Don't fuck with me. Take your gods and your tribes and shove them. I want nothing to do with any of it. The next time one of you stands tall and puffs his chest out and tries to bully me like I'm some pup, I will wait exactly two years. Then I will dress up in my black ninja costume and I will kill you. And I'll damn make sure I get away with it, because when I was a boy, you taught me to be patient. Have a nice day!!

Becoming Old

Twain Pigott

How is the moon? I guess it too learned about life from shelling butter beans. I don't guess that it would have been so hard on my back if the savory finished product wasn't so close to the ground, but who am I to argue with the way things are...which brings me to my point:

I am tired of the circle! Remember the Mr. Potato Head, now that was a toy. Now it's the same old toys over and over. Kick this guy, shot that one, this girl pees and this one vomits after lunch. All these types of marketing will just lead to a Disney cup that isn't dishwasher safe and sends your mother off crying about your dad's drinking habit. Hold on people...let's sit back and think about it!

I tried to tie one of those cherry stems in my mouth, guess what? Really...go ahead take a stab...give up? I couldn't do it! What was the point of that...the point is 21-28 year old people are looking for some good toys and we are bored to death.

We can't ride in those little toy two 8-volt cars, but if we could we would. Not so much that we don't like our cars, but they are for quote-unquote transportation.

Give me something that I use everyday at work and make it kick some ass.

Forget it! We are not the market anymore even though ten years ago Tonka would try to sell me a dump truck with sharp aluminum edges. This "what have you done for me lately" attitude is starting to piss me off.

Remember me? I used to buy your products, but now I am too old for you! Well eat me my friend. I AM TAKING UP GOLF!



"Seven Foot Falls"

Amy Holms

1998

Silver Gelatin Print

16" x 20"

I Lived

J. Shannon Pierce

The music blared.
My hair grew long.
By the river
Gathered with friends,
As the fire passed round.
Drinking the river
Brewed water,
I lived.
Worries forgotten
Nights grew long.
Days became numbered.

Daring the dangers.
Testing the waters, again.
I fell into darkness.

Friends gathered.
Tears were shed,
As the fire passed round.

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